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VATICAN II
TWENTY YEARS LATER

ROBERT P. IMBELLI

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Correspondence

Change of address

Wheaton, Ill.

To the Editors: The article by David C. Morrison ["Armageddon in Triplicate," July 16] should help fuel public understanding of the illusion of any civil defense measures in a full-scale nuclear war. Because Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles can reach America in twenty to thirty minutes, how we would have any time to realistically evacuate is beyond me. Firestorms caused by a nuclear attack would reach ambient temperatures exceeding eight-hundred degrees centigrade and turn shelters into crematoria.

Even though it is estimated that up to ninety percent of all Americans would be killed, the U.S. Postal Service plans to distribute postage-free Emergency Change of Address Cards following a nuclear attack. (The displaced survivors would be able to get their bills and junk mail.)

Human Sciences Research, Inc., concludes that a newspaper should have little trouble operating with a skeleton staff of survivors when the war is over. (The readers would be able to find out about all the "good news.")

Since neither the U.S. nor the Soviets could survive and win a nuclear war, we should reduce the risk that such a conflict would ever break out. The need for an immediate, mutual, and verifiable U.S.-Soviet nuclear weapons freeze (followed by major reductions) is even more urgent.

DENNIS R. NELSON

Spirit of the Age

Lynchburg, Va.

To the Editors: Father James Burtchaell, the Notre Dame theologian, reflects gracefully and thoughtfully in the June 18 *Commonweal* on "The Future of Our Fellowship."

I should like to ask him and the thoughtful readers of this journal whether the McCarthy era in the '50s would have been the best time to re-evaluate the principle that a man is innocent until proved guilty? And whether Nazi Germany of the '30s would have been quite the time and place to propose that no race is superior to another? The Zeitgeist or Spirit of the Age of those periods, it may be thought, might well have prevented a just perspective.

Then let me further pose two further questions: Is the most sex-saturated age since late Imperial Rome (probably as the result of the swing of the pendulum from that other excess, Victorian prudishness) the ideal moment to re-evaluate the two-thousand-year tradition of clerical celibacy? And is the period when our own Spirit of the Age is uttering soprano shrieks to the effect that women must be everything, including marine drill sergeants, precisely the moment to re-evaluate that other two-thousand-year tradition of the male priesthood—even if the 'pool' of males is only half our immense population? Wouldn't it be wise (though we so seldom are) to table them both until, say, 2082? . . .

SHELDON VANAUKEN

The author replies

Notre Dame, Ind.

I was unsuccessful in conveying to Mr. Vanauken the sense of my plea for a reconsideration of present qualifications for ordination. Clerical celibacy was not put forward as an issue of sex. One could have discussed the sexual integrity and witness of the clergy; I did not. Nor was celibacy considered under the larger and more appropriate aspect of Christian marriage. My argument was attentive to quite another side of the issue: that of service to the church. Granted that there be some advantages to the church in an exclusively celibate clergy, my question is whether we pay too high a price for them. By declining to consider for ordination married persons who abound in the graces we identify as God-given and needful in our public servants, are we depriving millions of their right to be convened at least weekly for the Breaking of the Bread? And, where ministers are available, have we provided the people with men of lesser divine endowments simply because of our refusal to consider better men for the task?

Mr. Vanauken has also misconstrued my remarks on the ordination of women as somehow reminiscent of the contemporary insistence on equal opportunity for women. Frankly, I find that movement in our time to be a credit to the age, but it was not at all my point. Women ought to be able to be ordained, not because they seek to be (a poor reason to ordain men or women) but because God has endowed them with the graces the church seeks in its officers.

My point is simple enough. If we truly wish ordained servants who are numerous enough and graced enough to do Christ's work among us, we must probably admit that by requiring them to be a male gender and ready to accept celibacy we are, at least nowadays, thwarting our own purposes and the church's needs. Ours is not too distempered an age to ponder these things.

(REV.) JAMES TUNSTEAD BURTCHAELL, C.S.C.

Fate of the innocents

Portland, Ore.

To the Editors: Re your editorial, "Israel in Lebanon," [July 16]: What we are witnessing in Lebanon today is an Israel out of control. One senses the government is so overcome with anger and frustration that it is now eliminating all potential threats at any expense. As the frenzy of the effort escalates, less and less reason is used to justify the carnage.

The PLO's history is one of inexcusable terrorism. This terror must be dealt with, but not at the expense of innocents.

(Continued on page 543)

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AFTER THE BUTCHERY IN LEBANON

THE RIGHT-WING militiamen who carried out the latest in a seemingly endless series of massacres in Lebanon are called "Christian," and Menachem Begin was in a synagogue commemorating Rosh ha-Shanah when the news broke. These two facts should be enough to give religion a bad name for this week and a good many weeks to come. Editorial denunciations of the butchery flooded from the presses all over the world, denunciations of the Lebanese for their actual acts of slaughter and of the Israelis for what were at least sins of negligence and omission. Of the former, no words are strong enough to express what needs to be said about this slaughter of the innocents; of the latter, perhaps the *Jerusalem Post* expressed it best when it said, speaking for the conscience of Israel: "Rosh ha-Shanah 5743 has become the Rosh ha-Shanah of shame. It is the shame of the state, of the government, of the army. It is the shame of every individual citizen. For we have all been made accomplices to the horrible Rosh ha-Shanah massacre in West Beirut."

The memory of this slaughter in the Palestinian refugee camps will not be easily erased. Does even Defense Minister Ariel Sharon imagine that Israel's role in the affair is calculated to turn the PLO away from terrorism in the future? Clearly the United States must do all it can to alleviate the ongoing tragedy of Lebanon. Reconstruction there is an urgent and long-range task. Nonetheless, pressing as that task is, the Palestinian question remains at the center of the larger Middle East problem, and the key to the Palestinian problem lies in the Israeli-occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

First, therefore, credit where credit is due. Before the slaughter in the refugee camps in Lebanon, Ronald Reagan had at long last enunciated what is the beginning of a credible U.S. policy for the Middle East. It is true that no new national foreign-policy ground was broken in that plan, that in its essential outlines Mr. Reagan's proposals represent what has been the taken-for-granted outlook of all U.S. administrations for the last fifteen years. But in spelling it out explicitly, in calling for a "fresh start," the president has taken a definite step forward. Refusing to support an independent Palestinian state but calling for an end to Israeli settlements on the West Bank and for Palestinian self-determination there with links to Jordan, Mr. Reagan made plain U.S. determination to begin to face up to the Palestinian problem at last. Put forward at a time when Israel has demonstrated that it is militarily superior to any enemy or combination of enemies in the region, Mr. Reagan's plan is an appeal to the Arab world to reject extremism and terrorism and finally to make peace with Israel. To Arab and Palestinian moderates it provided clear and much needed encouragement to hear Mr. Reagan speak for the first time of "the legitimate rights of the Palestinians" and of their need "for a just solution of their claims." The president's words were tardy but no less welcome for that.

Reaction to the Reagan plan was mixed and in some quarters understandably

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tentative. In Western Europe it won immediate applause. The *London Times*, calling the president's initiative "well timed and well considered," said that it "is the best and most hopeful foreign policy move to come out of his administration." Other British papers of all political persuasions took a similar line, and official reaction in France and West Germany as well as Britain was favorable. The Egyptian government in its official response regretted Mr. Reagan's lack of support for a completely independent Palestinian state but said his plan contained "positive elements" and could provide momentum for the peace process. An initial, cautiously favorable response emerged from other Arab capitals, with Jordan — crucial for the Reagan plan — making it clear through authorized sources that its reaction was "favorable, with reservations about some points that have to be clarified." Later King Hussein edged closer to actual involvement when he termed the Reagan plan "a very constructive and a very positive move" and added that he planned to play "a very active part" in trying to bring about a federation between Jordanians and Palestinians. Even Yasir Arafat, ignored by Mr. Reagan, found some "good things" in the president's proposals.

Not so Israel, of course. It has long been obvious that biblical fundamentalist Prime Minister Begin wants to annex "Judea" and "Samaria" as soon as possible. Indeed, many

National affairs

UNSEATING A KING

THE DOWNFALL OF A PRE-REAGANITE

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY is not much of a political instrument, but it's a fantastic collection of people. Will Rogers offered the most famous statement of this theme when he declared that he was not a member of an organized political party. "I'm a Democrat," he said.

In Massachusetts, Democrats come in an especially wide range of shapes and sizes. The folks in South Boston who are mostly Irish and can't stand busing are Democrats. The intellectuals and would-be intellectuals over in Cambridge are Democrats. Many of the upper-middle-class inhabitants of Newton, Brookline, and Wellesley are Democrats. And in the industrial towns like Fall River, Lawrence, and Haverhill, just about everyone is a Democrat. In the state Senate, Republicans have become such an endangered breed that the likable Republican minority leader, John F. Parker, once put a sign up in his office declaring: "NOT A MINORITY. BUT A CHOSEN FEW."

Because it has so many members preaching so many doctrines, the Democratic party in Massachusetts is especially fractious. And this year's Democratic primary between Governor Ed King and former Governor Michael Dukakis was one of the most bitter confrontations in many years.

Part of the bitterness was ideological. King is perhaps the most conservative Democrat in the country outside the Deep South. King is no neoconservative; he is not liberal on this and conservative on that. He takes stridently conservative stands on just about everything. Tax cuts — he's for them, especially for business. The death penalty — he's for that, too. Abortion — he's strongly against. Welfare — doesn't much like. Neighborhood groups that obstruct his economic development plans, programs generally favored by business — guess. The high-tech boom has been good to Massachusetts, and King asserted that the tax cuts he supported helped make this industry grow. Thus King became known as Ronald Reagan's favorite Democratic governor and Ted Kennedy's nemesis. Thus did he win endorsements from both Arthur Laffer of the famous Curve and Richard Viguerie, the New Right direct-mail genius.

Mike Dukakis's roots are in the middle-class liberal reform movement that started getting off the ground in the early 1960s. Indeed, one of the reasons why virtually everyone in Massachusetts is a Democrat is because large numbers of middle-class citizens, who were the bulwark of liberal Republicanism converted to the Democratic party because of people like Dukakis (and later because of the anti-war movement). But Dukakis himself is no arch-liberal. In fact, he might best be viewed as a premature example of what is currently called a neoliberal.

When Dukakis took over as governor after the 1974 elections, Massachusetts was deeply in debt. To the consternation of many liberals, Dukakis cut social-service budgets, along with lots of other things, and raised taxes. Many liberals could never forgive Dukakis for these cuts, and in 1978 some abandoned him for a splinter left candidate or abstention. King, in a model media campaign that presaged President Reagan's victory, united all the right-wing populist protest groups and capitalized on the general view that Dukakis was distant and arrogant.

There was, however, one aspect of the Dukakis administration that was decidedly left-of-center: As governor, Dukakis appointed some of the country's toughest regulators to oversee the banking and insurance industries. So tough were Dukakis's regulators that the industries they looked after contributed very substantial sums to King, allowing him to run the media campaign that succeeded.

By 1982, many of the liberals (and some of the not-so-liberals) were rather ashamed of having let King win. The King administration had more than its share of scandals — a tax department official facing investigation committed suicide a few weeks before the primary — and moral

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people believe that the war in Lebanon was fought primarily in an effort to destroy PLO influence on the West Bank, thus making it easier to find Palestinians there willing to acquiesce in Israel's takeover plans. Thinking after Israeli success in Lebanon that he now had a green light for annexation, Mr. Begin was understandably furious at Mr. Reagan's proposals, and his cabinet unanimously rejected them, announcing immediately afterward official approval for ten new Jewish settlements on the West Bank, Mr. Reagan or no.

The official Israeli reaction was disappointing, but it came as no great surprise. And if the Israeli cabinet was unanimous in rejecting Mr. Reagan's proposal out of hand, it does not mean that Israeli public opinion is. The essence of the Reagan proposal is that Israel should withdraw from occupied territory in return for recognition by the Arab nations, peace, and guaranteed security. Polls in Israel show that an increasing number of Israelis favor withdrawal on exactly those terms, and the welcome given the Reagan plan by the opposition Labor Alignment, which has always favored a Jordanian solution on the West Bank, guarantees that there will be a national debate on the issue, whatever Menachem Begin says. Rather than trying to incorporate the 800,000 Palestinians on the West Bank into Israel, with or without citizenship, many Israelis favor what Secretary of State Schultz describes as a Palestinian

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rectitude became Dukakis's main strength. But what struck many was King's ability to come back from something like fifty points behind to lose by "only" eight points.

What King tried to do, through another clever media campaign, was to polarize the Democratic electorate along class lines. The vastly overworked cliché of the campaign was that King, the candidate of business, really represented the attitudes of "Joe Six-Pack." And Dukakis was cast as the candidate of the "chablis-and-brie set." (One positive side-effect of the campaign is that the stock wine-and-cheese image was used so much that detractors of middle-class liberals will have to find a new term of opprobrium.)

The King campaign ultimately failed for a number of reasons. First, working class voters were more worried about corruption than the voting analysts gave them credit for. Second, Governor King's devotion to the interests of business suggested that he knew far more about chablis than he let on. And third, Dukakis made regulatory issues work for him in a populist way. He pointed out, for example, that tough regulation of insurance companies saved people more money in their role as motorists than King's tax cuts saved them in their role as taxpayers. Finally, Ted Kennedy turned out to campaign for Dukakis, making the contest into something of a referendum on Reaganism.

Still, Mr. Viguerie, looking on from his direct-mail house in Virginia, cannot be entirely displeased with the outcome. For the Dukakis-King race did display the deep cultural rift in the Democratic party between more socially conservative working-class voters and the suburban liberals. That King, the ardent defender of the well-to-do, could even appear as a hero of the working class is a tribute to the power of cultural perceptions. (King is also a Catholic; he is also Irish; he also goes to Mass every Sunday. None of this hurt him.) King became the inheritor of the old Irish Democratic party, even though his views are far to the right of that party's authentic son, Tip O'Neill. Dukakis's people looked like middle-class interlopers.

Something of the same sort of cultural war is going on nationally, has been, in fact, ever since the McCarthy and McGovern campaigns brought many middle-class activists into the Democratic party. Yet the other lesson of Massachusetts may lie in the fact that the Dukakis campaign finally succeeded in balancing out its appeal to the middle class with a little bit of populism built around, of all things, *regulation*, and criticisms of the King administration's kindness to the rich.

In November, Dukakis should win with ease over John Winthrop Sears, a Republican who is as Yankee as he sounds. Sears's history is that of a liberal Republican and an honest public servant; and many of the same suburbanites who like Dukakis could easily have voted for Sears over King. But the very similarities between Sears and Dukakis work in Dukakis's favor: the working-class ethnic Democrats who voted for King will, all things being equal, pick a Greek Democrat over a Yankee Republican. Sears has been moving to the right in an effort to pick up King votes and King financial support. It's really the only thing that Sears can do, but he may end up alienating suburban liberals without picking up much working-class support.

There is a final point to the Massachusetts race that may have a broader application. In Massachusetts, people who are not registered in either party can vote in whichever primary they want, and in any case it's pretty easy to switch your voter registration. There was a concerted campaign by some Republicans to get their fellow partisans to switch to the Democratic party to vote for King. Quite a few Republicans did, which is yet another sign of how ideology is displacing our political parties as the foundation of our politics. The *Boston Globe* gleefully pointed out after the primary that despite King's image as the friend of Joe Six-Pack, the governor carried Dover, one of the wealthiest suburbs in the state. No doubt Republican crossovers helped there. Or perhaps King simply won the votes of those rich people who can't stand white wine. Unfortunately, there were no polls taken to test this theory.

E.J. DIONNE

(E.J. Dionne, a previous contributor to Commonweal, *is Albany bureau chief for* The New York Times.)

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homeland there that is a "totally demilitarized area." And they are not alone; it is significant and encouraging that on this issue American Jewish opinion is not lining up monolithically behind Mr. Begin but that such organizations as B'nai B'rith, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the potent lobbyist group, and other groups have reacted with at least qualified commendations of the Reagan plan.

All of this does not guarantee success for Mr. Reagan's initiative, of course. The road ahead is long and rocky. Official Arab reaction at Fez II contained some heartening signs, but it was a long way from representing a position one would have wished for. King Hassan of Morocco said that the goal of the eight-point peace plan adopted by the Arab leaders was to reach a "state of nonbelligerency" with Israel as a first step toward the eventual normalization of relations between the Jewish state and its Arab neighbors, and true enough, the Arab leaders did call for a UN guarantee for the security of all states in the area. Nevertheless, they could have well been more explicit if they intended to include Israel in that guarantee. Furthermore, some pro-PLO critics say the Reagan proposal was fatally flawed from the start by its very effort to be "reasonable," an effort which meant calling for no bargaining with the PLO and no support for a totally independent state — an effort to be reasonable which predictably failed to placate Prime Minister Begin in any case, as they point out. Former Secretary of State Alexander Haig, on the other hand, attacked the Reagan plan from the opposite point of view, describing the call for a freeze on Jewish settlements on the West Bank as "a very serious mistake" and denouncing the plan for Palestinian autonomy in association with Jordan.

Such criticisms are serious and cannot be dismissed out of hand. However, these and comparable complaints could well be expected of any proposal that, like Mr. Reagan's, really represents a starting point for future negotiations. No initiative on the part of the U.S. could possible satisfy all parties or resolve overnight the historic impasse between Arab and Jew in the Middle East. No one would claim that the Reagan plan is a perfect plan, but it does offer a reasoned proposal for compromise by all concerned. Now it is crucial that President Reagan — contrary to his past record on such matters — stick to his guns and use both carrot and stick to influence both reluctant Israelis and hesitant Arabs in his direction. At this point what is essential is to get the embattled parties in the Middle East to the bargaining table. The Reagan plan provides at least a chance for this.

ELECTION NOTE

Daniel P. Moynihan once suggested that the logical leader for New York Democrats would be a "Catholic liberal," which he defined more or less as a working politician who read *Commonweal*. Perhaps Moynihan fulfilled his own prophecy, the question being whether, by 1976, he could best be described as a *Commonweal* Catholic or a *Commentary* one. Be that as it may, a *Commonweal* reader emerged from the recent New York primary as Democratic candidate for governor. Mario Cuomo is not only a subscriber but has sat down, on occasion, to write this journal a letter. Not surprisingly, a major isssue in the primary was whether anyone so decent and thoughtful could possibly be an effective politician. The Democrats' answer was yes. In case the whole state agrees in November, we'll be ready to process a change-of-address.

Of several minds: *John Garvey*

VARNISH ON THE WAFFLES

FEELING BAD ABOUT BEING BLOWN UP ISN'T ENOUGH

IT WAS ENCOURAGING to see nearly a million people show up at the beginning of the UN's special session on disarmament. It was good to see so many people bear witness to the fact that they don't want to see the human race kill itself. During Ground Zero Week in my own home town a group of people from various local peace organizations (Pax Christi, Quakers, members of the Church of the Brethren and others) distributed literature about the arms race on the public square. Almost all of the people who stopped by the booth were in favor of an end to the arms race. Republican doctors and lawyers contributed money and signed nuclear freeze petitions. Army veterans encouraged the effort. We got an occasional preacher, who said that nuclear destruction was prophesied, and a couple of young blow-them-all-up sorts, but for the most part people responded with an enthusiasm which was so eager it made it clear to us that a buried anxiety was surfacing. More recently there have been conservative objections to the level of U.S. military spending, and city councils in every section of the country have passed resolutions calling for a freeze on the production of nuclear weapons.

It *is* encouraging. But although I hate to pour varnish on your waffles, as one of Major Hoople's boarders said, I think it would be a mistake to think that this means more than it does. Putting negative feelings about being blown up into practical form isn't as easy as it would be in a world run by the sane. Proponents of arms control disagree on the freeze proposals and the value of SALT; NATO allies object to "no first use" pledges. One objection is that a cut-back in nuclear defense means more troops in Europe, which means the possible return of conscription, the last legal form of bonded servitude.

So as encouraging as some signs are, we shouldn't be too encouraged by what has been called a "rising consciousness," because it isn't clear yet that it means a real willingness on anyone's part

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to change very much. It is easy to shove the kid around in a stroller with a sign around his neck which says "war is not healthy for children and other living things" (whoever said it was?), but then what?

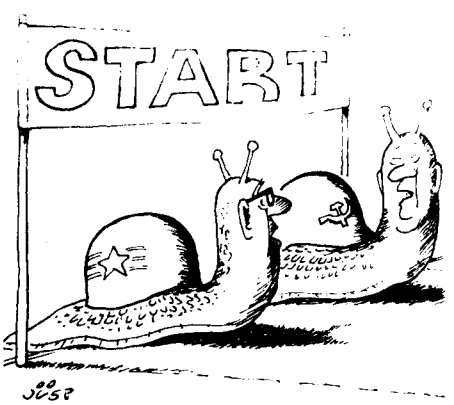
Sometimes a metaphor can take over and do extra duty, appear to be more than it is and, in this case, encourage us where we have no business being encouraged. The various signs of dawning awareness are doing more work than they ought to. Not that it isn't good to see people beginning to understand that their nation's systems of defense could end the possibility of life on earth — that awareness is certainly better than the sleepy acquiescence we have been used to, the crazy willingness to trust the people in charge which has marked the time from Hiroshima to the present. But this sudden surge of feeling isn't much more than turning over in bed, a twitch during a nightmare. Waking up requires a readjustment, and where the readjustment involves something so vital as our survival as a species, it will have to be a profound one — more profound than a simple understanding that it is technically possible for us to kill off everyone else. That understanding is a beginning, but that's all it is.

Nuclear apocalypse has become an appropriate metaphor for us because, following the horrors of World War Two, the death camps, the fire-bombing of Dresden, the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we realized that human beings are capable of doing anything, obeying any order, committing any atrocity in the name of any ideology or national allegiance; and having learned that horrible truth about what we are willing to do and be, we also learned, with Hiroshima, that we are capable of finishing the whole job off. We can do what only God was thought to be capable of doing: we can end the world. We see an interior collapse which seems to be without any limit or end, and we see the external possibility of ending it all in one vast white silent flash. All sorts of concerns are sucked into that real possibility, based on our honest knowledge of what we are willing to do, the way light and time are said to be pulled into the density of a collapsed star, a black hole.

But where nuclear weapons are seen as the particular demons of our age, where their unique horror crowds out other horrors, other demons might escape our understanding and return to possess us in new forms.

It is the finality of nuclear war which terrifies us. The terror isn't unreasonable; the end of the world is not a stupid concern, especially when you have all the equipment at hand to make it possible. But terror of that ending, sensible as it is, has been challenged by conservative Christians who have argued that opposition to nuclear weapons is based on the idea that there is nothing worse than dying. After pointing out that everyone dies anyway, they charge that opponents of the arms race believe that survival means everything, and that death is the worst thing that could happen to anyone.

But this is sophistry. If death is not the worst thing that can happen (and I agree that it is not; here we have to be aware of Socrates, Job, the valiant mother in the second book of Maccabees, as well as Jesus and all martyrs), neither is domination by an enemy force. Much of Jewish religion blossomed under just such a situation, including the particular variety of Jewish religion which came about because of Jesus. Jesus rather explicitly separated himself from those who supported the status quo and from those who thought of opposition to the status quo as a problem to be solved in terms of power. Both the established power and the power which was willing to take its place were missing the point — maybe because power, control, and domination were the terms in which both sides thought, terms which had nothing to do with his kingdom. Some conservatives have argued



that opposition to weapons of total destruction is nearly a sign of a lack of faith, because such anxiety betrays a lack of faith in the reality of a life beyond this limited, anxious, earthly one. But this begs the more important question. What does it mean to say that we are willing to use nuclear weapons? To kill another human being is a much worse thing than dying at his hands. May we do absolutely *anything* in order to survive? Apparently. It is funny in a dark way that people who find abortion terrible, as I do also, think that the destruction of whole cities full of people can be justified as long as it is done for the sake of the right ideology.

The problem, however, is not nuclear war but the acceptance of total war — a war which allows the slaughter of civilians — which has made nuclear war a question more of style than substance. The death of a child by napalm is as final and complete as the vaporization of a city. We can get fascinated by the special effects approach to nuclear war — but if we do we ought to remember that the non-nuclear fire-bombing of Dresden raised the surface temperature of that city to one comparable to that of the surface of the sun, made it hotter than Hiroshima. When I saw photographs of children on fire in Vietnam I realized, as I am sure many parents did, that it was an accident that they were not my own.

At the end of *The Fate of the Earth* Jonathan Schell raised questions and gave no simple answers, and was criticized for doing so. He said that we will face the problem of nuclear annihilation as long as we insist on national sovereignty. As long as we gather under systems which depend upon allegiances smaller than the fact of our shared humanity, and as long as we assume the right of those who wind up, by whatever means, in charge of those groupings to kill those who oppose their ambitions (something we assume any time we accept the idea that anyone ought to kill or die for his country), we will have wars. And, as Schell understands, given the state of technology a war today means the possibility and under some conditions the great probability of nuclear war.

When Schell pointed this out he was criticized for not offering a specific

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blueprint away from sovereignty to sanity. That demand is a bit like insisting that the doctor who diagnoses cancer cure it once and for all. It is an understandable desperation, but not rational. Some critics of Schell's point of view seem to want a strategy which will allow our nation-states to hold on to everything they now think they have, including the notion that their citizens ought to be loyal to them, and at the same time move towards a situation in which they would no longer threaten one another. But we have to remember that in relatively recent times the loyalty which ideology demands has given us genocides of Armenians, homosexuals, Gypsies, handicapped men and women and children, most of the Jews of Eastern Europe — and most recently, the non-Khmer Rouge Cambodians, whose murderers are now supported by the Reagan administration for reasons which ought to give his own ideologists pause. Loyalty has given us our times, with all of its bloodbaths. When our children are more, not less, cynical about governmental authority the world will be safer.

What Schell says is simple and necessary. We need to change. It may be that nothing less than a thorough change in the way we see our relationship to government will keep us from ending the world. A nuclear freeze, new treaties, a build-up of conventional troops to replace the deployment of nuclear warheads — these things only postpone a horror which will remain inevitable as long as we continue to think the way we think.

JOHN GARVEY

Of several minds: *Thomas Powers*

THE ROAD TO MASADA

BEGIN INCREASES ISRAELI ISOLATION

MY FATHER and I share an office in Vermont during the summer. He usually arrives about 9:30, carrying the newspaper. I look at the headlines and we talk for a few minutes. Very often, last June and July, the subject was Israel. Almost every day there was something on the front page about the invasion of Lebanon. The published remarks of Menachem Begin sounded very much like those of a man who at last has got his enemy where he wants him. My father saw things differently. As Begin relentlessly forced the Palestinians into yet a third dispersal since 1948 my father said — at least eight or ten times in two months, always in the same words — "Begin is determined to have a new Masada."

When the first Arab-Israel war ended in 1948, Masada chanced to be inside the green lines — that is, on the Israeli side of the ceasefire lines. Other sites nearby where Jews lived in ancient times were on the West Bank, annexed by Jordan. Masada was the last or one of the last Jewish strongholds to succumb to the Romans following the Jewish revolt in 70 A.D. Herod had built a frontier fortress on the site, a high plateau overlooking the Dead Sea. After the fall of Jerusalem a small army of Jews retreated to Masada and waited for the Romans. The siege which followed lasted a year or more. Josephus tells the story in great detail in *The Jewish War*.

At the end, when the Jews were starving and the Romans were finally about to breach the western wall, the survivors — about a thousand in number — decided to commit suicide. They chose lots to see who would act as executioner. The losers each killed nine of their fellows, and then chose lots again until only one man remained. He killed himself. When the Romans entered the fort they found the garrison dead. Two thousand years later the Israeli general and archaeologist Yigael Yadin excavated Masada and found some of the broken shards of pottery used to draw lots. Officers in the Israeli armored corps, I have been told, receive their commissions at night in a torch-lit ceremony among the ruins of Masada, where they pledge never again.

The ancient drama of Masada is still vividly apparent on the site. Parts of the fortress have been restored, but that is not what creates the effect. For one thing the fort commands a vast expanse of the surrounding Dead Sea wilderness. The climb up from the Dead Sea takes a couple of hours. A friend and I did it late in the day in 1975 and there were moments when I wondered if I were really going to make it. The top was all but deserted. We wandered for an hour or two. From the walls you can look down and see the outline of the ancient Roman siege camps and the Roman wall of circumvallation, completely surrounding the base of the plateau to keep supplies for the besieged from getting in, or messages from getting out. Masada is easily defended, but impossible to escape. Looking down, it is not hard to imagine the awful despair of the Jews who sat there month after month and knew the Romans would never go away. For the ancient Jews, the retreat to Masada was a strategic mistake of the sort it was impossible to correct. Once the siege walls were up, the end was certain.

It is precisely this, of course, that Menachem Begin is determined to avoid. Modern Israel has refused to accept the constriction of a siege. When it has felt threatened it has struck out — into the Sinai in 1956; into the West Bank, the Golan Heights and the Sinai again in 1967; into Jordan to retaliate for PLO raids until the PLO was driven out in 1970; across the Suez Canal by air when Nasser followed a policy of no peace and no war until his death; across the canal again in the October War of 1973. Israel has engaged in a clandestine war of assassination with PLO terrorists in Europe, conducted a lightning raid into Uganda, destroyed a nuclear reactor near Baghdad by air, and repeatedly crossed the border into Southern Lebanon to attack Palestinian guerrillas.

For more than twenty years Israel has followed a policy of carrying war to the enemy, so long as the enemy chooses war. Begin's invasion of Lebanon, and the siege of the PLO in West Beirut, is entirely in keeping with the spirit of Israeli military policy — a clear attempt to

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hunt out the enemy and destroy his capacity to fight. This offensive posture — a quickness on the trigger unprecedented in modern times — is in direct contrast to the notions of war revealed at Masada. There faith was put in walls. Modern Israel has no walls. When it is threatened it strikes out. Israel's neighbors can choose peace or war, but it has got to be one or the other, and whichever it is will be on Israeli terms.

It wasn't strategy my father was thinking of when he said Begin was determined to have a new Masada, but his unbendingness. The advance to Beirut was only part of it. More troubling was the determined destruction of Palestinian communities — first by air attack and artillery, finally by bulldozer. It was as if Israel had determined that Palestinians would not be allowed to live in communities, or even to gather together. There was much talk of bringing peace to Galilee, but this seemed a thin pretext for a campaign on such a large scale. The PLO has indeed attacked Israeli villages in Northern Israel, and it has got small right to complain of Israeli retaliation. It was the scale of the retaliation which suggested Israel had something larger in mind. It is likely that more Palestinians were killed by Israelis since the beginning of June, than Israelis have been killed by Palestinians since 1967. Israel was not trying solely to halt sporadic rocket attacks but to destroy the PLO as an autonomous political force, to force it into dependence on neighboring Arab governments.

As a military force the PLO has always been negligible. Its 15,000 "fighters" may have been heavily armed with Soviet weaponry but they did not seriously threaten Israel. What they did do was to guarantee a quasi-sovereign status in Lebanon, and thus put weight behind the Palestinian political agenda. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon was an attempt to destroy the PLO pure and simple, not in order to protect the Israeli villages of Galilee, but to hinder the growth of an effective local political opposition to Israeli absorption of the West Bank.

It is one of the ironies of modern Israeli history that it established itself on the coast of the Mediterranean, not in the central highlands which were the historic heart of ancient Israel for all but two brief periods of its early history. Begin recognizes this fact by his insistence on referring to the West Bank as Judea and Samaria, and it is increasingly clear that neither Begin nor Israel itself intends to surrender the captured territories, now or ever.

The scale of Israeli settlement of the West Bank dwarfs anything established in Sinai. Jerusalem has been annexed and turned into a Jewish city, and the process is being repeated in the rest of the West Bank, with one difference. When Jerusalem was annexed the Arab inhabitants were offered Israeli citizenship. This does not appear to be the plan on the West Bank. The occupation is a harsh one, not so much militarily as legally.

The Arab population is hemmed in by

Israeli law, blocked from buying land or building outside of narrowly prescribed areas. Arab schools are frequently closed, Arab lands are seized under various pretexts, Arab economic development is stunted and Israeli economic development promoted. The control of water and other resources is entirely in Israeli hands. Perhaps most important, there is no prospect of a change in the situation. Arab nations cannot force Israel to surrender the West Bank, and the United States will not. These facts are already beginning to have the predictable effect: the Arab population has begun to move away.

When I was in Israel a number of years ago I was struck by the country's extraordinary isolation. Young Arabs traveled all over the Arab world, from North Africa to the Persian Gulf and beyond to Baghdad. For a couple of dollars you could take a taxi from Beirut to Damascus, or from Damascus to Amman in Jordan. But the nearest place Israelis could go was Athens. Israeli men sometimes joked that they had traveled widely through Arab countries — in the Army. But the truth was they felt confined. For the pure adventure of it Israeli high school students sometimes crossed secretly into Jordan to visit the ancient city of Petra near the southern end of the Dead Sea. Not all of them came back. The Jordanian army sent Bedouin patrols into the wilderness to find them, and a Jordanian told me the Bedouin could *smell* the Israelis.

A young Israeli and his wife visited me in Vermont this summer. One afternoon we split and stacked a cord of firewood. He told me he had never seen a cord of firewood at one time before. A few weeks earlier he had been called up by his reserve unit and sent to fight in the Bekaa Valley. As soon as he was released he and his wife set out on a journey to see the world. They expected to be gone for a year or so. Then they would go home and have a family. I asked him about the West Bank. "We should give it back," he said. "They hate us there. We can *never* live together. Things have gone too far. We should have encouraged local political leaders but now it's too late. They all look to the PLO."

Perhaps Begin will succeed, the PLO will spend the next few years fighting for its political life, the Arab countries will do nothing, and the United States will murmur protest but go on supporting Israel with military and economic aid. Perhaps the Arabs on the West Bank will lose hope and drift away. Perhaps in twenty or thirty years the world's mapmakers will decide to forget the lines of occupation since 1967, and color it all Israel. Begin is taking a large gamble, but he has got Israel with him. It is hard to imagine an opposition government willing to dismantle the settlements and go back to the green lines. But I can't help thinking of the view from Masada, with the wall of circumvallation below and the outlines of the camps where the Roman soldiers waited patiently for time and starvation to do their work.

THOMAS POWERS

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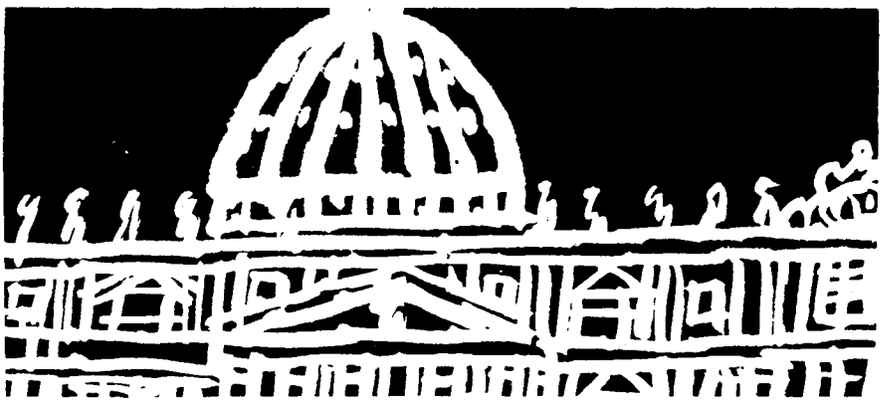
Vatican II: twenty years later



Reconstructing Catholic consciousness after 'that superbly destructive Council'

ROBERT P. IMBELLI

TWENTY YEARS AGO this October, I (together with thousands of others) descended, with much curiosity and some hope, into the vast St. Peter's Square for the opening of the Second Vatican Council.

Had I been more knowledgeable about the past, my awe would doubtless have been greater at witnessing this solemn inauguration of the Catholic church's Twenty-First Ecumenical Council. Had I been more prescient of the future, I would certainly have paid closer heed to the mild first tremors which, ultimately, would shake the very foundations of traditional Catholicism. However, being neither historian nor prophet, but only a seminarian about to embark upon the study of theology (in Latin!), I was content to watch (and, of course, photograph) the last untroubled procession of the Counter-Reformation church, whose passing, lamented or not, is more certain than is the form of what will follow upon it.

Another image associated with those ante-revolutionary days twenty-odd eons ago rises Proust-like from the mists of memory. This at the end of June 1963, upon the death of John XXIII and the election of Giovanni Battista Montini as Paul VI. A group of some twenty New York priests and seminarians, studying in Rome at the time, were shepherded by Francis Cardinal Spellman through Vatican corridors, past clusters of astonished archbishops and miffed monsignori, to be among the first received in audience by the new pope.

We were, in retrospect, a mixed bag, reveling in the heady atmosphere of new-found freedom, aspiring somewhat pretentiously but quite earnestly to the relatively painless realization of theology and church brought up to date, ecumenically tolerant of the aging Spellman and unabashedly enthusiastic about the urbane Montini. We represented, however modestly, the vigor and promise of an American church come of age. Within the year John F. Kennedy, whom the same eager group had scurried to meet at the North American College on the occasion of his visit to Rome, had been assassinated; and the slow descent into the maelstrom had begun. Of that representative band, half have since resigned from the ordained priesthood. Not quite the "signs of the times" foreseen by the drafters of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World; yet signs of the times nonetheless.

Perhaps my earliest intimation that Vatican II's "*aggiornamento*" would entail much more than most of us had bargained for came during a retreat made in the Fall of 1967, directed by a venerable and wise Camaldolese monk. From the vantage of his hermitage he sensed that the "updating" espoused by the Council was some seven centuries late in coming. His intuition still strikes me as cogent. He mused that, when Dante began to write in the vernacular, the church ought to have followed suit in its theology and liturgy. Instead, it rested in the secure and rich culture in which it had grown comfortable; only to have the living language of a cultural elite slowly and imperceptibly become the dead dialect of a ghetto.

It was sobering to ponder during that retreat how long-standing had been the progressive dissociation of church and world, of theology and culture. In view of the long-postponed dialogue, any prospect of easy aggiornamento faded rapidly. Perhaps the symbolic realization of this came to the English-speaking church on the occasion of the first faint steps toward liturgical updating, joining Latin and English in an odd and impossible mix, with the congregation at one moment responding "*et cum spiritu tuo*" and at the next "and also with

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you." That strange hybrid soon gave way to a full translation of the whole Mass into the vernacular — which is certainly *more* than the initial tinkering, yet considerably *less* than the reinterpretation of rite and symbol desired by many.

This conflict of "more" and "less" marks the experience of the past twenty years and continues into the disorder and discontent of the present. Whether in liturgy, in ministry, or in ecclesiology generally, more options are available than had ever been dreamed possible in pre-Vatican II days. Yet there is widespread disappointment at unrealized hopes and dismay at an often superficial adjustment rather than a truly radical transformation. Twenty years later the fruits of the Second Vatican Council seem not unlike the primordial fruit of Eden: having tasted, our eyes are now opened, the way back is barred, the way forward uncertain. With apt paradox, therefore, Rosemary Haughton speaks of Vatican II as "that superbly destructive Council."

WHAT, THEN, has been destroyed? Intentionally or not, John XXIII and the Council he convened brought an end to the era of post-Reformation Catholicism which Trent had structured and Vatican I had reinforced. This traditional Catholicism, for all its considerable achievements, saw reality in an essentially dualist way: sacred/profane, church/world, clergy/laity were distinctions both real and radical, founded in the divinely constituted order of things. Catholic consciousness and practice proceeded from these fundamental dichotomies to construct a symbol system which both reflected and reinforced this primal split.

Hence sacred liturgy needed a sacral language for its congruent celebration. Church embodies a "perfect society" with its peculiar goals, means, government, law, and, if need be, penalties and sanctions over against an increasingly hostile civil society. Men and women "left the world" to follow Christ on the more perfect path of the evangelical counsels, relegating others to a sort of second-class citizenship in the City of God. There were discrepancies, no doubt, in the symbol system and its functioning; but it was powerful and compelling enough to create and sustain a defiant alternative to the drift and threat of modernity. And it attracted converts! There was something costly about being Catholic; a distinguishable religious vision and identity was offered which, despite its difficulties, appeared profoundly appealing.

That there was much of the superficial and the parochial in the vision and practice of traditional Catholicism goes without saying. That its strong sense of identity seemed more and more purchased at the price of intellectual and cultural schizophrenia proved, ultimately, its undoing. But unless one appreciates the profound strengths, both spiritual and sociological, of traditional Catholicism, one cannot, I think, take the measure of the current malaise nor risk the needed reconstruction. For the bare, ruined choirs housed, however inadequately, something of profoundest import, whose seeming absence renders us all relatively alienated and homeless.

At the heart of the matter, as Rosemary Haughton has been insistently reminding us for some fifteen years now, is language. Despite its desiccated dogmatism, traditional Catholicism still carried strands of sheer poetry — whether in its Gregorian chant, its sacramental symbols, or its ecclesial universalism. It spoke in strange and foreign speech of the reality of God and the foundational importance of human community. It brought to expression the yearning of millions for meaning in their lives and anchored it in the rock of catholic and apostolic faith.

This linguistic universe, for all its imposing grandeur, crumbled the first time priest turned to people and mumbled, however inarticulately, "the Lord be with you." The fierce reactionaries present at the Second Vatican Council probably appreciated the rules (and the fragility) of "language-games" better than their reformist antagonists. Their "blessed rage for order" translated itself into a passionate defense of the linguistic status quo, convinced that, once the language were tampered with, disorder would certainly follow. They proved prophets *ante eventum:* for the rule of Latin in matters ecclesiastical has seemingly yielded to linguistic (and ecclesial) anarchy.

A recent study by an English sociologist, William McSweeney, fascinatingly chronicles that anarchy. His book is entitled *Roman Catholicism: The Search for Relevance* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980). It is must reading for all would-be reformers. Unlike others who have attacked the aftermath of Vatican II from the perspective of romanticized, at times dishonest, reading of the past, McSweeney approaches his task with a definite sympathy for the reformers, tempered by incredulity at their sociological naiveté. Historians will find in his work incisive insights into the increasing centralization of Roman Catholicism since the French Revolution, culminating in the rule of the "Pian popes," while theologians will admire his pointed survey of the "new theology" of de Lubac, Congar, and Chenu, painstakingly preparing the theological stage for Vatican II. But historians and theologians alike can only be given pause by his measured conclusion that Roman Catholicism's contemporary search for relevance has led to the dead end of irrelevance, that *aggiornamento* has degenerated into mere accommodation, and that the liberally lauded "pluralism" of doctrinal expression is theological sleight-of-hand to camouflage the *de facto* promiscuity of contemporary Catholic belief and practice.

These are "hard sayings," and not ones that I personally would accept without important qualifications. But it may be salutary to take seriously the suggestion of a friendly observer and critic that the emperor (or, in this case, Mother Church), having put aside her triumphalist regalia, might indeed be prancing about in the buff. Put in slightly less poetic fashion, McSweeney's book seems to me to present a striking instance of Peter Berger's dictum that sociology is the "fiery brook" through which theology today must pass. If one maintains (as I do) that Vatican II's "deconstruction" was both evangelically justified and historically appropriate, then the crucial question on the ecclesial agenda twenty years later is whether the same might be said of the "reconstruction" we envision or, conversely, fail to envision. Is it Roman Catholicism which is

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being reconstructed, and what criteria do we have for deciding the issue?

Were I asked to state briefly the major theological achievement of the Second Vatican Council, I would unhesitatingly reply: the recovery of *tradition*. There are two inseparable aspects of this. On the one hand, there was the rediscovery, thanks to the careful historical labors of the 1940s and '50s, of rich veins of liturgical and ecclesial traditions antedating the "traditional Catholicism" of the post-Reformation church. On the other hand, there was the even more radical realization that tradition is as much process as content (*traditio* as well as *tradita*), and that this process is living, creative, and community-based. In the words of an often and deservedly quoted passage from the Constitution on Revelation (*Dei Verbum*): ". . . the church, in her teaching, life and worship, perpetuates and hands on to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes" (#8).

Perhaps the "Revolution" in theology launched by Vatican II had its equivalent of the storming of the Bastille on that November day of 1962 when some 60 percent of the Council Fathers voted against the proposed schema on revelation which had been prepared by the curia-dominated theological commission. In face of the obvious dissatisfaction of the bishops and despite the failure to achieve the mandated two-thirds negative vote, John XXIII in a dramatic intervention withdrew the draft and reconstituted the commission. (An exercise of papal supremacy which seems to have escaped the fulminations of Hans Küng.) From this act the real beginning of the Council might be dated; and from the refashioned commission came the marvelous little treatise on tradition which broke the theological strangle-hold of the "traditionalists." For it supplied the cutting edge of teh revolutionary realization that "traditional Catholicism" was not Catholicism *tout court*. Indeed, when measured against the theological standard, embodied in the Catholic sense of tradition, post-Reformation Catholicism proved defective on more than one count.

Yet, as I have suggested, the immediate effect of the conciliar accomplishment was "destructive." It deprived Catholics of the language with which they had habitually ordered their religious universe and through which they had articulated their own self-understanding. It is no wonder that its loss created a wide-spread sense of anomie, a loss of personal and corporate religious identity. Though the trauma was probably unavoidable, we might, conceivably, have endured our dislocation and diminishment less convulsively, more gracefully, and with greater wisdom. Be that as it may, twenty years later we are searching for a new language with which to spell out to ourselves and others our identity. This search represents the "constructive" moment of the Council's achievement . . . and it has still barely begun.

Now no one will dispute that twenty years is a considerable portion of the life of an individual. And each can trace, in his or her own terms,my own trajectory in those years from youthful seminarian to middle-aged professor. But, whether the consideration consoles or not, twenty years are a minuscule period in the life of church or culture. In my blacker moments, I regain some perspective by reflecting that two linguistic geniuses of the Protestant Reformation, Luther and Bach, were separated not by twenty but by two hundred years. Or, putting the matter more professorially, year after year I scan a new class of theologians, not in the expectation of espying a potential Thomas Aquinas or even Albert the Great, but in the hope of beholding a budding Peter Lombard. Even had we done all things faithfully and creatively, there is still no rushing the language.

Vatican II's deconstruction, therefore, has created a condition of linguistic deprivation, reducing many of us to an almost infantile state of stuttering (hopefully, one not completely removed from the Pauline "groanings" of *Romans* 8). And given the silence of our aphasia or, alternatingly, the farrago of our babblings, it is little wonder that a sympathetic but hard-nosed analyst like McSweeney would conclude from his investigation of post-Vatican II Roman Catholic theology: "In the new theology there are no compelling theological grounds for becoming a Roman Catholic." The sociologist's challenge to the theologian is straightforward, and it deserves a straightforward reply. Twenty years after the Council, then, the theological prospect must be founded upon a personal response to the query: why am I a Roman Catholic?

IF THE COUNCIL showed that the traditional language of post-Reformation Catholicism was not the unique way of articulating Catholic consciousness, then one might legitimately draw the inference that there is a deeper stratum of the language— a "depth grammar," if you will—which underlies and generates successive and always partially adequate empirical forms. It is this depth structure which distinguishes the Catholic experience and expression of the world. If I am not mistaken, David Tracy alludes to this when he speaks of the Catholic "analogical imagination." However one signify it, it forms the basis both for personal commitment to Catholicism and for the elaboration of an adequate Catholic theology in every era.

Let me attempt to elucidate this foundational reality by referring to the Catholic "sacramental consciousness." It is the conviction, in the words of Hopkins, that "the world is charged with the grandeur of God." This sacramental consciousness is centered upon the fact of Incarnation, and radiates forth to touch and transform the whole of created reality. It is the "Beatrician experience," incomparably poeticized by Dante, whose creative recovery marks every period of true reform in the church. At the same time it is Eliot's "hint half guessed, gift half understood" which must ever and again be reappropriated and probed more deeply.

The concrete expression of this sacramental consciousness can be multiform, and can certainly be more or less full and faithful. But it seems to me to be normatively governed by certain foundational sensitivities — keeping with our linguistic model, call them "grammatical rules." Thus the language which brings Catholic sacramental consciousness to expression must exhibit or, at least, be open to the corporeal, the

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communal, the universal, the cosmic, and the transformational. Anything less fails of catholicity. A brief comment on each of these traits seems called for.

Any expression of authentic Catholic consciousness must be characterized by sensitivity to and appreciation for human bodily reality. It is body which sacramentalizes spirit, just as language gives body to consciousness. Any depreciation of body, whatever it may call itself, does not represent Catholic consciousness, though it may indeed express very well the depth grammar of some alternative linguistic system, say that of Manicheism or Jansenism. The post-Vatican II church has made a significant empirical recovery in this respect by incorporating into its sacramental ritual a renewed stress on that most fundamental of bodily senses: touch. The imposition of hands, not only in the rite of ordination, but in those of anointing, reconciliation, and even eucharistic celebration, represents a linguistic recovery of prime importance.

A second characteristic element of Catholic consciousness and language is its communal dimension. Catholic language is, irreducibly, "we-language." It rejects any suggestion that the foundational religious datum is the individual alone before God, by the contrary proposition that we never stand alone before God. For it is precisely *we* who stand before God. Hence the community is matrix and mediatrix of the Catholic sacramental consciousness. And, even at the height of contemplative awareness (which the Catholic tradition definitely fosters) the language remains plural. Dante's great vision of the Trinity is, inseparably, a vision of redeemed humanity.

A third feature of Catholic consciousness and language is its universal extension. By this I mean that the scope of the Catholic linguistic universe is unrestricted. It addresses both the private and the public, the natural and the cultural, the personal and the institutional. It can legitimately articulate the concerns of "liberation theology" and "right to life movements." Indeed it suggests that a significant bond may unite them: the bond of sacramental consciousness. At its depth Catholic consciousness recognizes and gives voice to the possibilities and pitfalls in every contingent cultural expression, just as it appreciates that humankind both bears and distorts the divine image.

One aspect of this universality merits special mention. Catholic consciousness and language integrates both life and death in a reciprocal exegesis which counteracts the fatal human tendency to deny death and snatch at life. Catholic sacramental language proclaims "the death of the Lord until he comes;" so that those schooled in this language may learn, in Charles Williams's telling phrase, "to die each other's life, live each other's death," since all have died in Christ and now live in him.

WERE I asked to state briefly the major theological achievement of the Second Vatican Council, I would unhesitatingly reply: the recovery of *tradition*.

A fourth characteristic of Catholic consciousness and language is its cosmic thrust. Here again I do not deny that particular expressions may at times have fallen short of the integral Catholic vision; but these are to be judged and corrected in accordance with its primary and privileged symbols. Here the Easter Vigil celebration is paradigmatic. For on this first of sabbaths the whole of the created universe is co-involved in Christ's redemption and serves as the hallowed environment for the baptismal death and re-birth of new believers. What follows as consequence upon this is the tremendous responsibility incumbent upon believers to be and become those children of God, for whose appearing, according to *Romans* 8, the whole of the created universe groans in expectation. The fate of the earth is entrusted to humankind; and this incarnational responsibility finds an ultimate ground in Catholic sacramental consciousness.

A final trait of Catholic consciousness and language is its transformational sensitivity. There is a radically processive strain to Catholic tradition with its insistence upon growth into Christ, transformation from glory to glory, and final transfiguration. Deeply congruent with this Catholic concern is the distinctive importance given to the figure of the saint in Catholic imagination and performance. Again, there are ample instances of abuse. But the genuine insight does not aim so much to place upon a pedestal as to sacramentalize a common vocation and destiny. The communion of saints embodies and expresses a distinctively Catholic sense that our common journey to God, our *itinerarium in Deum,* finds direction and support in the lives and witness of those in whom the fire and rose have become one. In the process the very self is transformed.

WHY, THEN, am I a Catholic Christian? Because the Catholic tradition is the bearer of a singular grace: that of a comprehensive language which combats our subtle and not so subtle tendencies to partiality, to the erection of our immediate and often distorted experiences into the measure of the whole. Authentically Catholic language seeks to promote and sustain the creative tension of "both/and" rather than succumb to the easier, but often reductionist, language of "either/or." At the same time the comprehensiveness of Catholic language is not indiscriminate nor slovenly syncretistic. For its ongoing point of reference is the Word whose classic and normative expression is incarnate in Jesus Christ.

Twenty years after the Council, the sociologist throws down the gauntlet to the theologian (with however much academic propriety): Is it, in any identifiable sense, Roman Catholicism which is being reconstructed in the wake of Vatican II? And linked with that: Are there any compelling theological reasons to become a Roman Catholic today? As a Catholic theologian my task might be likened to that of the grammarian who seeks

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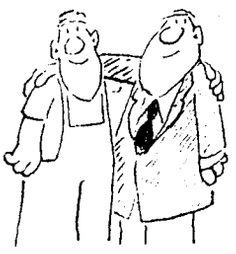
to display the depth structure of the language of Catholic tradition, both to offer criteria for evaluating the adequacy of any given reconstruction and to suggest the rich possibilities of creative expression the language can provide. But this remains, admittedly, only a partial reply, and outlines a still rather abstract prospect.

Hence, as a Catholic Christian, my earnest hope in this post-Vatican II time of peril and promise, of deconstruction and reconstruction, is for the emergence of genuine Catholic poets who can draw forth from the springs of sacramental consciousness things both old and new and articulate them in language and symbols apt for our day. Indeed both the Catholic and human prospects may depend upon such poets. For at the close of his careful and critical examination of the bankruptcy of moral discourse in the West, Alasdair MacIntyre suggests: "We are waiting not for a Godot, but for another—doubtless very different—St. Benedict" (*After Virtue*). It is a striking conclusion and a striking symbol. Benedict—theologian, sociologist, poet, saint—symbolizes well the magnitude of reconstruction and the cost of discipleship which we are beginning to fathom twenty years after the start of Vatican II.

WHY THE STEELWORKERS SAID NO



Steel-ing for battle

DAVID BENSMAN
& JACK METZGAR

U.S. STEEL has signaled its intentions to wage war on the United Steelworkers union. During concession bargaining in July, industry negotiators led by U.S. Steel's Bruce Johnston demanded a whopping $6-8 billion worth of concessions. When the talks broke down, Johnston mailed out to more than 100,000 U.S. Steel employees a letter accusing union leaders of selfish indifference to the needs of unemployed members. Now the company is pursuing its tough line with demands for major work rule changes at the Chicago South Works and Johnstown, Pennsylvania facilities.

U.S. Steel's posture is all the more troubling because the bargaining process revealed how unprepared the United Steelworkers union is to meet a serious challenge. A comparison between how the United Automobile Workers conducted negotiations and the USW's experience throws into high relief the lack of communication, trust, and leadership that currently imperils one of the country's most important organizations of working people.

When Lloyd McBride, president of the United Steelworkers union, announced on May 28 that the Coordinating Committee Steel Companies wanted to "talk to" union representatives about the industry's financial traumas, observers predicted that steelworkers would follow autoworkers in making substantial monetary concessions to their employers. After all, McBride was American labor's foremost supporter of corporate America's diagnosis of our economic woes; and there could be no doubt that with steel mills operating at only 43 percent of capacity, the industry is really suffering. So when McBride announced on July 30 that to his great regret, the concession bargaining had broken down, there was surprise and consternation. What happened to the emerging partnership of labor and management that was going to lead America to competitive vitality in international markets? And when Bruce Johnston, U.S. Steel's chief labor negotiator, lashed out at McBride and the union leadership, one really wondered "what gives?"

It was the steel companies' insistence on reducing their labor costs *over the long term* that caused concession bargaining to fail. According to *Business Week*, U.S. Steel has decided that if it can not bring its labor costs in line with those of its international competitors, the company will proceed with its diversification plan. From this perspective, the union's offer to forgo $2 billion in near-term wage increases was inconsequential.

The fact that concession bargaining failed in steel while it succeeded in auto has little to do with the conduct of either union. But if one observed the process of negotiations closely in both industries, it was clear that the steelworkers' union was much less prepared to meet the companies' aggressive challenge. Concession bargaining proceeded differently in the two industries in large part because the two unions differ greatly, and they always have.

In the auto industry, concession bargaining was a relatively open process in which President Fraser played a leading role, while thousands of union activists were able to participate in shaping events. By contrast, in the steel industry, President McBride's role was passive, and few union members even knew what was going on.

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In auto, when the companies began complaining, in the fall of 1981, that they needed relief to maintain competitiveness with the Japanese, UAW President Douglas Fraser indicated that he believed that the industry had a good case. He then used his considerable powers of persuasion, backed by his Research Department's economic analysis, to induce skeptical secondary union leaders to approve discussions with GM about reopening the contract. As talks got under way, union activists began to debate whether or not concessions were justified and would put autoworkers back to work; by February, rank-and-file opposition to givebacks convinced a majority of local union leaders to vote to break off talks. Then, after a union referendum approved a package giving Ford wage concessions in exchange for promises to improve workers' job security, President Fraser convinced the GM Bargaining Council to reopen talks with GM. Amidst a prolonged and vociferous debate conducted throughout the union, GM employees approved a similar package by a narrow margin.

HOW DIFFERENT was the story in steel! President McBride was never willing to advocate re-opening the contract to consider negotiations; when he met with local presidents in June, he merely passed on the companies' request to discuss their financial problems. During the month of July, the company tried to "sell" the need for concessions by showing slides about the the danger of Japanese competition. Yet never once did the steel companies tell their employees what they wanted. As company officials repeatedly refused to indicate what they wanted in terms of holidays, cost-of-living provisions, and wage freezes, worker suspicion grew. "This must be some kind of a plot, why else won't they tell us what they want?"

Rob Persons, a local staffer at Inland Steel's East Chicago plant, reports that when the company held its first meeting to make the case for takebacks, probably a majority of the local members were ready to go along. But as July passed without any concrete proposal being revealed, worker attitudes hardened. By July 23, only nine days before the bargaining deadline, the union's secondary leaders assembled in Pittsburgh still lacking any idea of what sort of deal industry bargainers had in mind; by then, membership pressure on local leaders to oppose concessions was intense.

In retrospect, worker rejection of the companies' pleas is not surprising. Steelworkers, like most industrial workers, are angry with management because their working conditions are poor and management authority is oppressive. In addition, steelworkers have seen their companies begin abandoning the industry in recent years. U.S. Steel's purchase of Marathon Oil is the best, and most inflammatory, example, but steelworkers know that diversification is on the agenda of all the major steel producers. Is it surprising that steelworkers were not happy with the thought that their employer would use the wages they forfeited to speed its disentanglement from the steel industry?

Given all the anger steelworkers felt towards their employers, it seems clear that even had the steel companies genuinely desired to reach an agreement, concessions would only have been possible had President McBride legitimated the companies' demands by campaigning for concessions himself, as President Fraser did in auto. But McBride chose to limit his activities to meetings with the union's secondary leaders, because his relationship with his membership is different from Fraser's.

It is easy to forget how different the history of unionism in the steel industry has been from that in auto. Although agitation for industrial unionism in the steel industry has long roots, and was intense in the mills in the years 1933-6, the organization of the steel industry to a large extent came about under the direction of John L. Lewis and Philip Murray of the United Mine Workers union and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The CIO ran the Steel Workers Organizing Committee for five years, until 1942, then imposed a highly centralized constitution on the new union. From the onset, relations between leaders of the locals representing the big steel mills and the International union officers in Pittsburgh have been filled with distrust and tension. Today, more than forty years later, McBride's grip on the locals comprising Basic Steel is still not secure; in both his election campaigns for union president, McBride's vote at the mills was unimpressive.

IF ONE NEEDS further evidence of the fact that the UAW president has more influence over his members than does the steelworkers', one need only look at the mechanism used to decide about concessions in the two unions. In auto, all employees at Ford and GM represented by the UAW were eligible to vote on concessions; in steel, the decision was made by the Basic Steel Industry Conference, a body of six hundred local presidents. One might infer from its name that the members of the BSIC all represented steel mills whose contracts were affected by the concession bargaining, but that is not the case. Many, perhaps two hundred, members of BSIC are drawn from plants not directly affected by the bargaining. They were there, as they've been since the BSIC was established in 1966, to bolster the power of the USW president vis-à-vis the steel locals.

It is the very isolation of the USW presidency that, in all likelihood, accounts for U.S. Steel's current attacks on the union. Not only did the company's chief negotiator denounce the union leadership for cowardly capitulation to rank-and-file pressures, he charged their failure of nerve would prolong

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unemployment and reduce American steel's competitiveness. Then Johnston proved his outburst was no fit of anger. On Aug. 6, U.S. Steel mailed to all its employees in basic steel a three-page letter outlining the steel industry's proposals for the "reformation" of the Basic Steel contract. "Unfortunately," Johnston explained, "we were not able to make an effective course correction in the rising cost of wages and benefits which now threaten basic steel's survival." Johnston warned the union that "continued unwillingness to make any effective accommodation . . . will injure more and more people." Johnston's letter was unprecedented and unexpected, a clear attempt to divide unemployed union members from their union.

Johnston's attacks on the steelworkers' union leaders are hard to imagine in auto. When the United Automobile Workers' GM Council voted to break off talks in February, GM was tough — it announced the closing of four plants and threatened to shift more work overseas — but it did not attack the UAW leadership for the breakdown in negotiations; instead, the company and UAW President Fraser combined to criticize union militants who had organized against concessions. GM indicated clearly that while it intended to "take back" from the union those contract provisions the company believed it could no longer afford, the company still wanted a working relationship with union leadership. Indeed, throughout the course of concession bargaining in the auto industry, company officials at Ford and GM showed they much preferred to extract concessions from the union in collective bargaining sessions rather than to win a strike led by union officials.

But now that President McBride has failed to deliver what U.S. Steel believes it needs, the company has abandoned the effort to maintain the "cooperative relationship" that obtained between the company and the union since 1960. On the surface, it appears that a strike in August 1983 is inevitable, as U.S. Steel pursues its efforts to bring labor costs into line with foreign competitors. Certainly, if industrial conditions remain stagnant, the steel companies will have little incentive to compromise.

If they do offer a new concessions package, it is unlikely to be a very attractive one, and that's the problem. The steelworkers' union, after forty years of top-down rule, has not developed a union-wide channel of political discussion and debate, a process of democratic decision-making, a web of leadership and trust. The UAW by contrast, developed in the course of concession bargaining a political dialog which informed members about the issues and enabled them to make a decision they're willing to back up. That seems a valuable thing to have as one faces the great challenges that lie ahead.

NOTES ON A SUMMER VACATION

Ten days that shook my world

PAT RYAN GREENE

MY VACATION TAN this year was acquired in Mexico's resort area of Cuernavaca, on ancient pyramids, in narrow, noisy, pollution-filled streets, and in garbage-filled ravines. For ten days, our group of eight middle-class Minnesotans took part in a program on culture and poverty in Latin America at the Cuernavaca Center for Intercultural Dialogue on Development (CCIDD).

Our time was spent, not relaxing in swimming pools in the weekend homes of the wealthy but with "the other Mexicans," for many of whom water is one of life's pressing problems rather than an ingredient of recreation.

One of our first tours was of the infamous squatter settlement of La Estacion in a mile-square ravine filled with a maze of huts jammed between sets of railroad tracks. Scrap lumber, old telephone poles, Datsun packing-case panels, and roofs of specially corrugated newspapers are the construction materials for this colony of seven-thousand people, one of six such settlements in Cuernavaca. A stinking trickle of water, a foot wide in places, wandered slowly through the settlement. Rows of individual outhouses, three feet wide, each with a padlock, straddled the stream, and below, women pounded their laundry on the rocks.

Inhabitants of an area must pay in advance for water or utilities to be brought in, which these desperately poor people managed to do almost ten years ago. The contractor they hired absconded with their money, an all-too-familiar pattern seen in dealings between the advantaged and the disadvantaged we met.

Seven years ago, three women again organized, in the face of masculine jeers, and were successful in raising the funds necessary to install ten water spigots to serve the entire population.

Those of us in the CCIDD programs—religious and lay, largely professionals from a variety of fields—saw what even most native Cuernavacans have not seen. A strikingly beauti-

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ful young woman told how she had lived all her life two blocks from La Estacion and had never been there until she was assigned to teach in the colony. "No one in her right mind would come near here," she said, repeating her mother's warnings. "It was thought to be a den of thieves. Now I know that most people here aren't bad. They just live in difficult situations."

The Cuernavaca Center was founded in 1977 by Ray Plankey, a forty-six-year-old lay missionary. Groups of up to twenty persons stay in Plankey's home and are intensively exposed to the realities of third-world poverty in order, as Plankey said, "to go through in ten days what I, and other missionaries, have in ten or twenty years."

Plankey's dedication to Latin America began in 1962 when he left a promising career as an Atlas rocket engineer to become a Papal Volunteer. He worked in Chile for eleven years until the overthrow of socialist President Salvador Allende in 1973. When his Chilean wife, Gabriella Videla, who had been active in international women's organizations and in 1969 had served as a professor of social work at Catholic University, was offered a job in Mexico, Plankey, with the support of the Weston (Vermont) Benedictines, began CCIDD.

A thought by Dennis Goulart, framed on a wall of the conference room, answers the question of what Plankey is about—"Yes, there is a link between meaningless lives on one continent and meaningless deaths on another." CCIDD studies the political, economic, and religious structures of Central American countries and the influence of the United States on those structures, and those studies are shared with students like ourselves. But the primary purpose of CCIDD is not to give facts that can be learned in an academic setting. It is to meet the people who are the statistics.

OF THE seventy dioceses in Mexico, three encourage the development of base Christian communities, seven tolerate them, and all others oppose their formation. Geraldo Thjsen, a former Sacred Heart missionary from Holland, is in charge of the four-hundred base communities in the Morelos diocese under Bishop Sergio Mendez Arceo of Cuernavaca. The quiet-spoken Thjsen, once a priest serving in Chile, was smuggled out after Allende fell; two people were killed for not revealing his whereabouts. He left the clergy, not because of problems with faith, but to become part of the people to whom he ministers, "My Christian being changed completely by contact with the poor," he said.

Direction for the base Christian communities comes from the bottom. "We don't have diocesan programs as such," Thjsen said. "The problems of life don't come in programs. For instance, when the price of tortillas goes up, we give facts behind the increase for analysis and possible action."

Study of the New Testament in the base communities has been a source of liberation for women:

- Adela, in her fifties, a widow of little formal education, is a leader in base communities. She said, "We used to think we suffer now to have our reward later. We are learning that we are to have life now." When asked if only the poor are in base communities, she answered, "The communities are organized for action to bring change. They give food for the spirit. The middle class and rich aren't hungry."

As part of her community action, Adela was visiting the sick in a hospital and found an Indian family, whose child was dying, sleeping on the sidewalk. She invited them to live in a chicken coop on the roof of her humble home. They stayed for months while the father tried to find work. The mother, Josephina, returned from the hospital with a new baby to care for along with her other four surviving children — a thirteen-month-old girl, a nine-year-old boy who is blind from malnutrition, and five-year-old twins. One of the twins, Ruth, had the good luck to be run over by a truck. She grew strong and healthy while in the hospital recovering from her broken legs.

Three of Josephina's children have died. Her mother-in-law had taken her seven-year-old son, who was ill, from their village into the city on the bus. The boy died in her arms in the doctor's waiting room. The grandmother, fearful of officials and knowing the expense of city red tape, carried him back to the station, waited several hours for a bus, and returned with him to the village for burial.

- Marta, whose family of four girls under seven, a son, eleven years old, and husband slept on the dirt floor of their nine-by-twelve-foot hut until Plankey brought a bed. She is secretly giving her husband medicine to make him sick when he drinks, hoping to stave off his beatings, which have impaired her sight. So often, when Mexican women describe their marriages as "good," they add, "My husband doesn't beat me."

- Angela, who lives in La Estacion, occupies a position better than most in the colony because her husband is a policeman. However, he only comes to see her and give her a little money every two weeks, as she, her ten children, and grandchild are his second family, a very common practice among Mexican men of all economic levels.

Angela rises at 5 A.M. to prepare meats for sandwiches. She gets her children off to school and leaves at 8 A.M. to sell the sandwiches at a construction site, carrying them up the hillside in buckets. She's back at 11 A.M. to make a second batch of food and returns to the construction site. Another trip home to make more food to sell at a school, and then to the market to buy supplies for the next day's work and for her family's meals. At night, she embroiders tortilla covers for tourists.

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"All my hopes are in my children," she said. "I don't want them to have to work as hard as I do."

Even giving birth was hard — alone, in one of the three beds in her one-room shack. She called neighbors only to cut the umbilical cord.

One kind of attack on poverty to emerge from base Christian communities is the formation of cooperatives.

Tomas, a potter like his father before him, lives with his family, on the bank of another ravine, Sacatierra, an area of special clay. Four vases, each almost six-feet tall, stood next to his house. He and another potter worked day and night for ten days to complete them in time for a building dedication. When officials came to pick them up, they said the city didn't have the money to pay for them. Tomas wisely refused to let the vases go.

He sells his pots to a shop at the top of the ravine; the shop offers them to tourists at prices three to five times what he has been paid. He tried selling his wares on street corners as other craftspersons do, but thugs, hired by the shops, broke the pottery. Perhaps, eventually, the production cooperative he and other potters are forming, may grow into another for marketing their wares.

Another primitive cooperative has been formed by three poor farmers who share tools and labor. Women who sew shirts in their homes, formerly for factories, now sell them through their own cooperative.

The Cuernavaca Center feeds and lodges program participants, the staff of three volunteers, and of course the Plankey family — Ray, Gabriella, and their three children. In addition, there is a constant stream of visitors. A sociology professor from Syracuse, a minister on the national staff of his denomination studying Spanish, and Brenda, an attractive, aristocratic young woman from Guatemala were among those who dropped in for discussions.

At one point, Brenda interrupted a lecture on Guatemala with her story, one that began like that of typical upper-middle-class suburbanites in the United States. She and her architect-husband had worked several years, finally moving into their dream home less than a year before. One day, armed government men came to the door, demanding her husband. She saw that they already had her brother-in-law in handcuffs. "We never knew why, because we were not at all involved in politics," she said. She became one of the eighty thousand families with a member missing.

Her father-in-law paid a huge ransom, but the two men were never found. Brenda fearfully read in the newspapers each day the descriptions of bodies thrown in the streets, some decapitated, as warnings to those who support the guerrillas.

After threatening phone calls, she knew she had to leave, but she also knew that the airports were checked and people on government lists arrested. She had no reason to be on the lists, but neither did her husband or brother-in-law. She began to walk out of the country, and in a small village, near the border, lost the baby she was carrying.

"I may not have been political before," she said, "but I certainly am now."

Another visitor was Mary, a slender Irish-Cherokee woman from Chicago's South Side, who stayed several days to rest. She is in charge of credentials for foreign press in Nicaragua. A former Peace Corps volunteer, she fought with the Sandinistas. Her husband was killed in the revolution.

The last of the quiet revolutionaries was Antonio, a Salvadoran who, with his brother, spent an evening singing haunting songs of his country, many of which he had composed. "My father abandoned me before I was born," he began, "and at seventeen days of age, my mother left me at my uncle's door. . . . The rich say they're rich because they work for their wealth, but my uncle always worked hard and never had anything."

Antonio was the only child in his village to go to school, walking several hours each day, sometimes in rain or dangerous conditions. He began at age seven and was twenty before he finished elementary school. He moved to town to attend high school and got a job in a factory for forty cents a week in 1970. "It's difficult for peasants like me to ever graduate," Antonio said. "We get out of work at 4 P.M., go to school until 10 P.M., get home at 11:30 P.M. and get up to be at work at 6 A.M."

When asked why he continued his education against such odds, he answered, "I could see that without an education, I'd end up like the old people in village, working so hard until I die."

For the last ten years he continued his schooling while working for the government and had been promoted to supervisor of ninety people. His studies saved his life. He decided at the last minute not to go on a retreat given by Father Octavia in order to prepare for an exam. The priest and four young students were murdered by government forces. This incident has been credited with inspiring Archbishop Oscar Romero to speak out against the government, earning him in turn death from a sniper's bullet as he celebrated Mass a year later. Antonio was in the plaza outside the Cathedral for Romero's funeral. Bombs were thrown into the crowd; 185 people were hospitalized and 35 died.

Antonio was also a member of a base Christian community. One night, a death squad of fifteen National Guardsmen arrived at his home. The men, under the influence of drugs, terrorized Antonio's family, and held guns to his head. They released him when they found his government I.D. card in his pocket and left. Two other men, also base Christian community members, were picked up that night and have never been seen again.

Antonio moved around, sleeping in different friends' homes for the next three months. When he began getting threatening phone calls at work, he left the country.

When a member of the group, moved by the songs of a land so afflicted, assured Antonio that all the Americans present had been protesting U.S. government support of the right-wing Salvadoran regime, he concluded with another song he had written. Part of one stanza, loosely translated is, "We, the oppressed, are also your brothers; we know the genocide is not a product of your hands."

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Screen

HEAVY CASUALTIES

DEBS & GRUNTS

ZACHARY MAYO (Richard Gere) does finally become an officer, but not a gentleman. Zachary is in O.C.S. at the Mt. Rainier Naval Base in Washington state. He's trying to get into flight school, but first he's got to get through basic with a Marine drill instructor named Foley (Lou Gossett, Jr.). This is such a grim prospect that Zachary needs something to live for in the meantime. That something is weekend liberties with Paula (Deborah Winger). Foley has warned "all you sweetpeas," as he refers to the recruits in his platoon, about girls like Paula. They're what he calls "Puget debs," girls who work in a local dime store or factory and think of these flight-school-bound young innocents as their ticket out of poverty. Basic takes twelve weeks, so a deb figures she's got nine to make herself indispensable. After that, the future fly boy *will* dispense with her because it's begun to dawn on him that he really will make it through the course and have a life after Foley. Nine weeks. That means the debs are training and straining as hard as the grunts. Foley spells all this out in detail. You'd think he was giving the mandatory lecture on hygiene. He makes romance with a Puget deb sound about as attractive as a dose of the clap, and he recommends the same preventive measure against both.

Unfortunately, Zachary doesn't listen to him, nor do Douglas Day Stewart and Taylor Hackford. They are, respectively, the writer and director of *An Officer and a Gentleman*. Between them, they have set this movie up as the most cliché proposition imaginable, one so cliché that even a man of Foley's limited vision can have only contempt for it. Foley's little speech to his sweetpeas is like a double dare Stewart and Hackford are delivering to themselves at the beginning of their movie: "OK, let's see you make something out of this hopeless situation." They flaunt the hopelessness by having Foley call attention to it. Then they act as if there's nothing to it, a piece of cake. They think that all they have to do is show us a little tits-and-ass, and we'll see that Zachary and Paula are really in love in spite of everything.

Five minutes after Zachary picks Paula up at a dance on the base she invites him to the beach for a quickie. They settle into a relationship of pure sex at some sleazy motel every weekend. Soon she starts to take the relationship seriously just as Foley predicted, and, sure enough, Zachary tries to dump her. But then, against all odds, and all belief, he suddenly does an about-face at the end. After graduating from boot camp, he gets on his motorcycle, rides to the factory where she works, and carries her out as the other people on the assembly line watch dewy-eyed and cheer. It's about as unearned as a happy ending can get. What's supposed to make it acceptable to us is the equally unbelievable bad luck of Zach's best friend, who also falls in love with a Puget deb. When he drops out of basic to marry her, she doesn't want him anymore because he's not going to be a flier. This turn of events inspires him to go back to the sleazy motel, and kill himself. That, I presume, is supposed to make it OK for things to work out well between Zach and Paula. Please, spare me.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

BIOGRAPHY, HISTORY & PSYCHOBABBLE

The thirties & Clifford Who?

SAUL MALOFF

IF SCOTT FITZGERALD came to symbolize the twenties in American literary history and myth, so was that once said of Clifford Odets and the thirties. Yet the instant such a statement is made, it rings hollow, seems flashy. For one thing, other contenders flock to mind; for another and in the first place, what can such a statement mean? A writer — unless we are speaking of the consummate writers without whom an age is not an age at all — individual writers do not a decade make, especially decades so various, so teeming with gifted writers, as those two emblematic, shaping decades. At the same time, there is some serious sense in which such statements strike one not only as true but as self-evident and in no need of apology or defense: a writer, by no means necessarily a major writer, catches a rhythm, a pulse-beat, something in the air, as no other does.

Clifford *Who?* No one below a certain age is likely even to know the name, much less its significance, unless driven by a strong interest in the cultural history of the thirties and its postlude, or in the history of American theater, drama, film. Or thirties history in the sentimental, romantic, authorized versions of the Left. To place Odets as a figure in history doesn't begin to convey the American myths, which confer far more nearly the actual sense of things as they resonate in time. "A shilling life," Auden said, "will give you all the facts"; and so will shilling history.

The Group Theatre set fire to the American theater and touched off rings of fire elsewhere, among other acts unleashing upon the world Harold Clurman and Lee Strasberg, not to mention Stella and Luther Adler, Lee Cobb and Edward Bromberg, Art Smith and Phoebe Brand, John Garfield and Morris Carnovsky,

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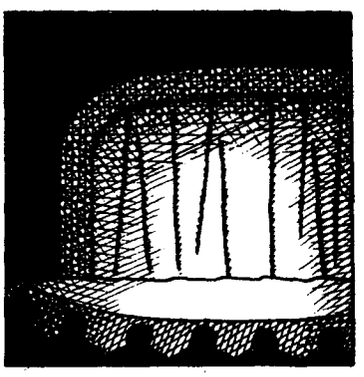
Franchot Tone and Frances Farmer, and others: the company of players, styles of acting, staging and direction, an idea of a theater that was to have permanent influence — a conscious, if eccentric, attempt to import and adapt Stanislavsky and the Moscow Art Theater. Of this moment in history Odets was the golden boy, the Group's principal playwright and its incendiary, lyric voice. Margaret Brenman-Gibson's immense biography of Odets is merely the first of a projected two,* and leaves off in 1940 when her subject (as well as longtime friend), reading the handwriting on the wall and following the breakup of the camp as it drifted one by one to Hollywood, went West himself and, just as myth requires, perished as an authentic, original writer.

The more earthbound truth is that the inseminating moment of the thirties had passed; and Odets's fragile talent had exhausted itself, though he would write other plays (and of course screenplays) during and after the war. But the great event which lay ahead of him (presumably to be dealt with at definitive length in the second volume) was in the first place political and moral — his appearance as a "cooperative" witness before the House Committee on UnAmerican Activities during its assault on Hollywood. If his creative emptiness had not been sufficient in itself to expunge his name from history — a brilliant evanescent flame now extinguished — his moral collapse would have done nicely.

There is something especially repellent about the sight and smell of moral surrender in one who not only "knows better," not only feels just as deeply as you and I do about such matters, but whose work, the play which launched him into public consciousness, made his name and established him as a writer and symbolic figure at one with the loathing we feel, whatever our politics, for the informer. In *Waiting for Lefty*, that celebrated debut which Clurman rightly called a "significant moment in history," less a conventional drama than a sequence of agit-prop scenes based on a strike (the obligatory ritual occasion in the "proletarian" literature of the period), in this instance of cab-drivers (that being a time when an audience could still be depended upon to respond with immediate, instinctive sympathy for exploited workers everywhere, including brutally exploited cabbies — yes, even cabbies) the villain exposed for the rat he is by his brother, a member of the strike committee, is the perfidious informer in their midst.

(Looking back upon it from the distance of a lifetime as a playgoer, I can say there would never again be anything like that wild excitement of audience fusing with players at the famous climax in shouting "Strike! Strike! Strike!" At the time I was a beardless boy; *Waiting for*



Lefty was the first professional production I'd ever seen in the "legitimate" theater; and I knew pure joy as I leapt to my feet to urge the cabbies, those stormbirds of the international working class, to raise the barricades — our vanguard, our brothers, our comrades, harbingers of the great day a 'dawning, and as we left the theater, my friends and I, none of us had the smallest doubt, I least of all, that even if it took its own sweet time getting here, got temporarily derailed in the barnyards of History, I would see a socialist America on or before the day my bar mitzvah was to befall me, both events being foreordained, in the very nature of things. As it turned out, neither event was to take place.)

IF *WAITING FOR LEFTY* caught the historical moment, the most consequential of the later plays (*Awake and Sing, Paradise Lost, Golden Boy*) caught a tone of voice, a manner or speaking (lyrical, intense, filled with a confused, passionate yearning for something unspecified, unformulated, forever elusive and all the more compelling for that): the most vital plays are both Jewish and "Jewish" and released into the distinctive "voice" of American letters a language and music and range whose echoes are to this day inescapable, deeply implanted in the soil of American-Jewish writing.

A very American career: an electrifying early phase followed by a quick withering when the moment passes and with it the lyric impulse, the sort of death we like to lay on Hollywood, that vast mortuary of the arts, though it is far more likely that Hollywood is the name we assign to the afterlife of the artist who has died in bed at home back East, long since. There, Odets wrote indifferent scripts, dreamed of composing a great film based on the life of his revered Beethoven, sent an occasional play into the world at distant intervals to remind his old admirers that he was still alive and was not to be written off; and by 1947 had run bone dry. If the promised second volume is as thick as the first (and one can readily imagine an even larger one), we may yet have a 2000-page exhaustive, authorized biography of an erratically gifted minor writer who left a fading legend, a slender body of time-bound work no longer read much less produced, whose name may soon vanish entirely (the publisher apparently felt the need to identify him in the sub-title as an "American playwright"). This massive work written by a psychoanalyst of no small reputation might seem somewhat excessive.

No mystery, after all. The Odets estate made available all the papers, the written detritus of a writer's life, the entire documentary record, public and private, all at the mercy and discretion of the designated biographer: diaries, journals, notebooks, letters, laundry lists, everything. A biographer's dream of heaven; and when the biographer is a psychoanalyst (and the "subject," or analysand, was a walking case history whose life reads like one), not a cultural historian or literary critic but a psychoanalyst first and last, then the resultant biography is likely to be that curi-

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* *Clifford Odets: American Playwright*. Margaret Brenman-Gibson, Atheneum, $30, 748 pp.

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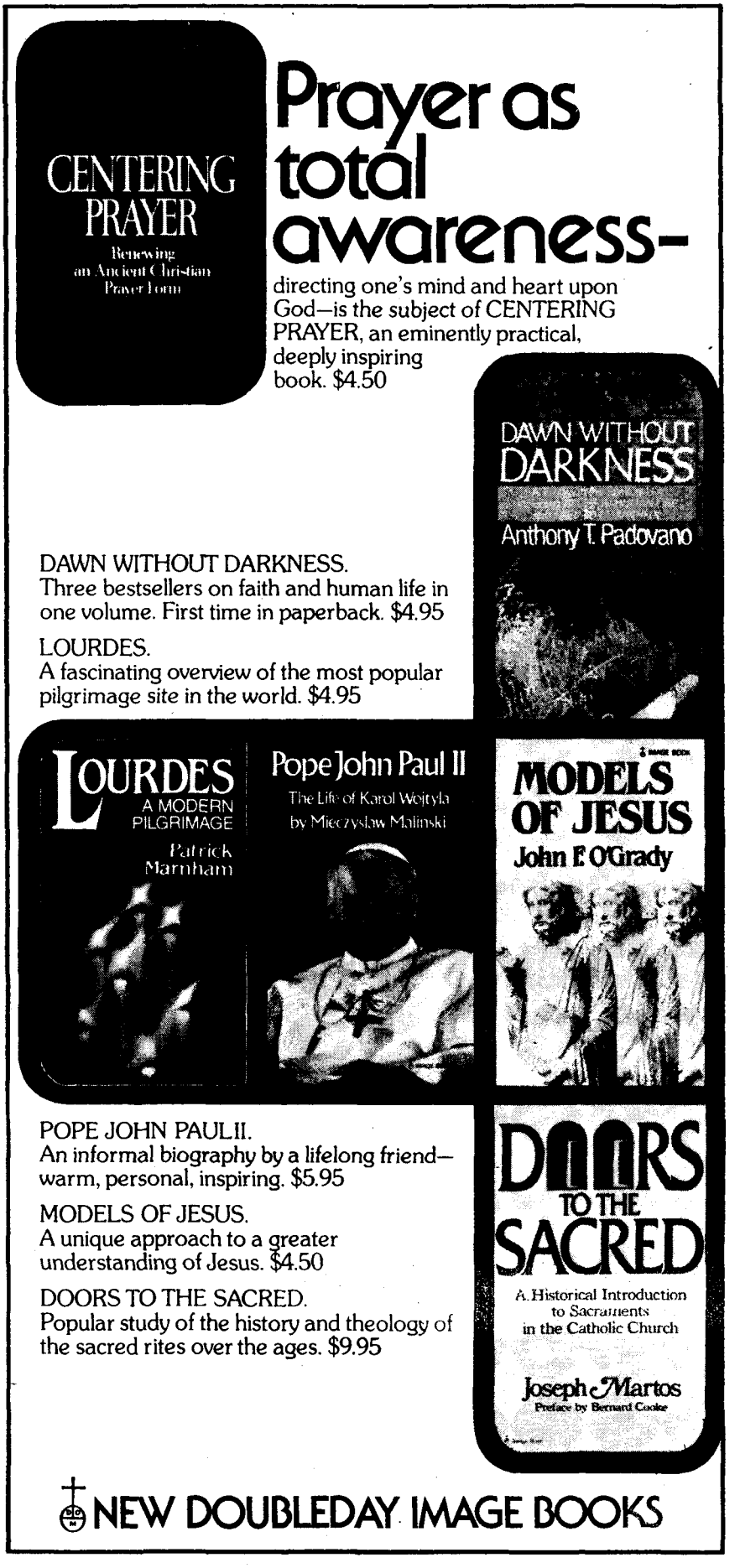
ous fusion — far more often than not, even in Freud's hands, that misalliance — of the shilling life and psychoanalytic procedures called psychobiography, widely practiced in this nation of born psychologists and kin to a related discipline called psychohistory, in which name great crimes have been committed — and at times some flickering illuminations cast.

In Odets's case the searcher doesn't have far to seek — the mystery is not that he was shattered by his father but that the boy didn't do as Oedipus did and slaughter the old reprobate soon and suddenly the day he was old enough to wield a halberd. But though such questions lie at the heart of psychoanalysis as mythology, theory and therapy, what relation can they be said to bear to psychobiography — what Brenman-Gibson calls "clinical biography" — in its particular application not to any patient but to the writer whose work and life are under minute, continuous, unrelenting — not to say chivvying, nagging, implacable, tormenting — scrutiny? Odets makes an ideal subject — he overflowed with symptoms, exuded and leaked them; Brenman-Gibson is no cheapjack sensationalist or coffeehouse wit ablaze and dangerous from a first intoxicating reading of Freud's early landmark writings — she is a distinguished practitioner in her field. Why, then, is psychobiography as a species of biography, and this "clinical" biography, so dismayingly unsatisfactory?

As with Marx so with Freud: the master is not required to answer to history for sins committed in his name. "I am not a Marxist," Marx said in pique or horror at what was already being said and done in his name during his own lifetime — what he might say now is best not thought about (though in thinking about it I've sometimes thought his self-designated disciples might well drive him into the arms of the enemy). And so with Freud, if not more so in every department save (perhaps) actual bloodletting: the tragic poet and dark prophet drowned in the Atlantic crossing only to be resurrected as an American optimist, soothsayer, faith-healer, café dandy; and the master's marvelous gift for deep, circuitous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analysis, metaphor, analogy, imaginative leap and sudden connection reduced to babble and banality.

The consent we give to Freud in his noblest work, no matter how great and bold the leap from ledge to ledge, is akin to if not of the same substance as the belief we accord the leaps of poetry, the connections forged in the imagination, acts abidingly true though unverifiable and immeasurable. We know them to be true; and we are able to "test" their truth in the cauldrons of the real world, where they prove true in such a way that intellectual and imaginative life is radically altered or altogether nullified if they are not. What did Yeats "mean" when he asserted that "all the ladders start in the foul rag bone shop of the heart"? Is the statement "true"? It had better be. So with the truths of *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *Civilization and Its Discontents:* without them the century soon ending is unrecognizable, its habits of mind and modes of sensibility reduced to a gibberish. Yet however tenuous the metaphors of the imagination and arguable the proposed connections among disparate objects might seem at first sight, we know them, once they have sunk into our consciousness, as constituent elements of our inner life, as if we were remembering with great surprise what we had long forgotten or didn't know we knew: they seem ancient and inevitable and possess first explanatory and then predictive power. Finally they seem not strange but familiar, the stuff of our common sense.

BUT WHAT does it mean and in what sense if any is it true to assert that Odets's lifelong psychic battering at the hands of an ogrish, overbearing, hectoring, cloddish, coarse-grained father led to the playwright's terror in the teeth of the "infinite life-and-death power of the critic," as if there's anything surprising about that widespread if not universal fear considering that critics, especially but not only of the theater, do in fact possess the power to maim and kill or let live. Ask any playwright, any novelist, including those who have been most tenderly nurtured by infinitely loving Dads (and let's not forget Mums). And this from an analyst married to a playwright! To psychologize about this misses the point; if one feels compelled to ponder Odets's heightened sensitivity to critics and criticism, however, one would be better advised to seek it in his own uncertainty about the depths and magnitude of his gifts.

And if this is an instance of chasing phantoms through the mists, what are we to make of the following instance of contrived word-play underlying a connection that is no connection at all, based on a disorder that isn't one, though it might have been, and is when it appears in others, the lot of it hanging on a word that is both misleading and readily replaceable by another more commonly used which, in addition to being the ordinary descriptive word for the condition, changes utterly the implied psychic weight and pressure. We speak, as everyone knows, of a "love" for music — I'd say Odets was "mad" for music if I dared; here is Brenman-Gibson's word-shift and what she makes of it: "It is possible that his *addiction* [italics added] to music, like that of George Bernard Shaw, served as a protection against an addiction to alcohol or drugs" and goes on to say that though Odets drank "heavily" at times, drink was never a "problem," and "drugs" certainly weren't. Convolution within convolution, and not a little slithery and devious, grounded in a play on words in which the unfortunate man's fondness for — all right, *love of*; very well, then, *passion for* — the art of music is accorded by that slippery equation the precious psychological weight accorded addiction in the pathological sense . . . with one escape

hatch provided by the uneasy writer's dear friend, "possible," by which all things are made possible, even the highly improbable, and possibly the impossible itself, if there is such a thing in the psychic universe of infinite possibility.

This sort of bogus "insight" is not only mischievous; it amounts to mutilation of the portrait and what comes to a kind of malpractice, certainly of the biographer's art, and, I venture to say, of the analyst's as well, It also runs the risk of plain damn foolishness, which a reader may find so offputting as to dismiss what is welcome and valuable in the book, especially some of the cultural and political history of the period, and of course the history of the Group Theatre, though here the standard work must remain Harold Clurman's *The Fervent Years,* which can perhaps be augmented but never replaced.

Two further instances will have to suffice, both examples of the application of what passes for psychoanalytic procedure to a literary work in its relation to the life itself. Commenting on the curtain scene in *Lefty,* and its final chorus of "STRIKE, STRIKE, STRIKE! ! !," though one would have imagined in one's innocence that no comment was necessary, Brenman-Gibson remarks: "Underneath the fiery political message, Odets is counseling himself . . . not to wait passively for his personal success and salvation, but to join with his Group brothers and deliver an uppercut to 'the enemy' responsible for *all* of their problems, ranging from betrayals by women to material deprivation, to his failure to get parts in plays"; and goes on to say: "His indictment of a patently unjust social system is genuine; the personal steam, however, is supplied by his relationship to his parents and by his current yearning not only to overcome his loneliness, but also to deliver an 'uppercut' to his surrogate fathers, the Group directors . . ." and so, hilariously or suffocatingly, on. On this sort of thing, one cannot bear to comment.

Any more than one can on the second, but one must be strong. In *Awake and Sing,* Hennie, matter-of-factly described as the "feminine identity element in Odets," as if that were self-evident, is

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made pregnant by a man not her husband; in the analyst's allegorical world where nothing is what it seems to be, however, the "baby" is "equivalent to Odets's brain-children, his plays, which appear to be, in his view, equally illicit and born of 'forbidden' passions, his unconscious wish to be "husbanded' by his father . . ." and so flakily on. A footnote in this connection even raises a delicate question of professional ethics on the biographer's part when she notes that "several of Odets's ladies spontaneously expressed the view that 'Clifford wanted to be husbanded more than wived.' "

Now I'll wager my hope of heaven against a 1982 dime that Clifford's ladies, whose name was legion, neither spontaneously nor deliberately said any such thing, for the simple, single, conclusive reason that no one talks that way, not, in any event, since the reign of Elizabeth the First. They were fed that line, and they swallowed. The language had to have been provided by their interviewer, our author, and framed in such a way as to attain from the unhappy ladies the precise formulation desired by Brenman-Gibson the better to press her thesis.

Do I then mean that none of this is possible in the phantasmagoric world of the unconscious? No, I do not; I mean merely that the analyst, while never offending against our common sense, against the allowable range of metaphor, against the analogical imagination, its heights and depths but also its strictures and limits, had better provide overwhelming support, and there's not a shred of it here; and even more, the emergent portrait and the means by which it was forged must have the palpable sound and feel of truth. Without that, all is psychobabble.

In our time, the art of biography not only invites psychological inquiry and insight of the biographer; it requires it. We demand it, rightly; that is the "state of the art" at this late date, and there is no going back. In a future article I want to look further at some of the problems posed by what Leon Edel calls "literary psychology" and assess his recent collection of essays, *Stuff of Sleep and Dreams: Essays in Literary Psychology*, in its light.

Books: BETWEEN FIRST & THIRD WORLDS

BASIC ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES
THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE POOR

Alvaro Barreiro

Orbis Books, $5.95, 82 pp.

BIBLE OF THE OPPRESSED

Elsa Tamez

Orbis Books, $5.95, 88 pp.

THE FINGER OF GOD
SERMONS ON FAITH AND SOCIO-POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

Allan Boesak

Orbis Books, $5.95, 100 pp.

WORSHIP AND POLITICS

Rafael Avila

Orbis Books, $6.95, 124 pp.

THE CHALLENGE OF LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Ed. by Brian Mahan and L. Dale Richesin

Orbis Books, $7.95, 147 pp.

TO CHANGE THE WORLD
CHRISTOLOGY AND CULTURAL CRITICISM

Rosemary Radford Ruether

Crossroad, $8.95, 85 pp.

Alfred T. Hennelly

IT HAS BEEN extremely discouraging to witness American foreign policy toward the third world in the past several years. The attempt to utilize these nations as pawns on the East-West chessboard has been, and will continue to be, futile and counterproductive, since it views the game through North-South lenses, that is, as northern developed nations (including Russia) versus southern developing ones. In this context I have sometimes dreamed that perhaps the highly-placed Catholics in the administration would actually read some of the theology being produced at a prodigious rate by their co-religionists in the third world and get some glimmer of what is really going on. The chances for this seem bleak, but here at any rate I will survey some of the recent literature in this area. Since my special interest is Latin American theology, I will concentrate there and include examples of the dialogue with it that is now flourishing in many parts of the world.

One thing to keep in mind is that actual books constitute merely the tip of a very large iceberg of theological production in Latin America. On a trip the summer before this to Mexico and Central America, I was amazed at the number and variety of different publications, ranging from periodicals to popular writing on all levels, including comic books. Perhaps the most influential "theology" at present may be found in the one- or two-page outlines that are composed for the liturgies of the base communities. Called *morrales* (literally, saddle bags containing food for a journey), these are the means by which theology nourishes the real grassroots of the church.

Also, one of the most common, indeed platitudinous, objections against Latin American theology is that it is too horizontal, that is, not sufficiently concerned with transcendent and spiritual verities. It is somewhat ironic, then, that the three Latin books reviewed here are concerned with such vertical and "religious" matters as the church, Bible, and liturgy.

Basic Ecclesial Communities is an important book for a number of reasons. Written by a Brazilian Jesuit, it is one of the relatively few books translated from the Portuguese in this country. My hope is that there will be many more, for I am

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convinced that the Brazilians lead the entire continent with regard to the extent and profundity of their theological production.

Barreiro's topic is also of critical importance in contemporary ecclesiology. For the pastoral approach of forming and nurturing small Christian communities represents a phenomenon that in one form or other has now spread to every sector of the globe. It has also generated intense controversy, as some welcome its emphasis on community with great enthusiasm, while others view it as a threat to their more pyramidal model of church. Moreover, it is in Brazil that the greatest number of base communities has arisen, and thus their experience should have great value for the rest of world church.

Barreiro achieves concreteness throughout the book by describing actual communities in different areas of Brazil. However, his major objective is to present a biblical reflection on the theme of God's preferential option for the poor. He is also extremely hopeful that the base communities will effect the evangelization of the universal church, that is, its conversion to the cause of the poor.

Bible of the Oppressed is another example of the keen interest in biblical studies in both Protestant and Catholic circles in Latin America. The author is a seminary professor and member of an ecumenical theological center (DEI) in San Jose, Costa Rica, and readily admits that her interpretation is deeply influenced by the viewpoint of oppressed people, a perspective which Gustavo Gutierrez has referred to as the "underside of history." Tamez charges that European and North American scholars have almost totally ignored (for ideological reasons) the theme of oppression in the Bible, whereas she believes that oppression (and its correlative, liberation) constitute the essential historical context for understanding the entire Bible. Her study, concentrating for the most part on the Old Testament, analyzes oppression among nations and within nations, the identification of oppressors and oppressed, and the forms and methods of oppression. As one of the few women theologians on the Latin scene, she is especially sensitive to the multiple oppressions of women, both in Scripture and in Central America today.

Worship and Politics, I must admit, impressed me much more by the importance of the subject than by the author's contribution to an understanding of it. A Colombian layman, Avila is blunt in his assertion that the Eucharist is "the most radical of liberations," but that it "has been so extravagantly barricaded with rubrical sandbags" that it has become a wall rather than a bridge to the people.

Most of the book is devoted to a study of the sociopolitical context in the evolution of Jewish worship and then of Christian ritual within this matrix. The final part, concerned with the design of a renewed Eucharist, comes as a disappointment after this interesting initial discussion. Generalizations such as that the Eucharist is "a school of liberation" never acquire any real substance; and how is one to make sense of the statement that "the content of the Latin American Eucharist is (or should be) the history of Latin America"? I am not persuaded, moreover, that North American churchgoers will ever envision the gifts of bread and wine as symbolic of the relations of production in our society.

But Avila has pointed to a very important problem for the Christian churches. Most people's contact with these churches comes during the service of worship. Well, then, how does this service actually function, as a weekly tranquilizer or anodyne, or as a stimulus to critical social consciousness and commitment?

The same kind of question is raised regarding the function of the sermon in *The Finger of God*. Boesak, a black South African minister, focuses much more intensely here on his own situation than he did in *Farewell to Innocence* (1977). He is clear-eyed in his recognition that "to preach the word of God relevantly in South Africa is to walk through a minefield—blindfolded." Yet he makes a strong case in an introductory chapter for ethical or political preaching, that is, preaching that recognizes the real situation and struggles of the listeners and addresses them in terms they can understand.

The rest of the book presents a dozen examples of precisely this kind of sermon to blacks in South Africa today. They are rooted in Scripture, incisive, and blunt in their condemnations, especially as regards the dominant sin or "estrangement" of apartheid. Especially moving is a sermon delivered after the death of Steve Biko in a South African jail, where Boesak acknowledges a deep-rooted "fear of our own liberation," but argues eloquently that this can be overcome by a love that "searches openly, honestly, and actively for justice and rejoices in it." After finishing this book, one wonders somberly what the future has in store for this prophet in South Africa.

The Challenge of Liberation Theology and *To Change the World* are serious attempts at dialogue among the various theologies of liberation. The first book is based on a conference on the topic held at the University of Chicago in 1979, while the second is a series of essays centering on the role of Christology in liberation theologies. What both have in common is competent research and a careful articulation of arguments. This may seem obvious, but not if we recall that most first-world studies of liberation theology are either neo-conservative diatribes or superficial academic efforts to make stale theology appear relevant.

The Chicago volume contains a number of responses and of basic disagreements among the participants, especially the sharp exchange between Dorothy Soelle and Schubert Ogden. In my view the most radical essay is by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, on a feminist approach to biblical interpretation. Many of the essays in the volume are followed by responses, but unfortunately there is no response at all to Fiorenza's many challenging questions, e.g., can the historical Jesus be a role model for contemporary women and is being a woman and being a Christian a primary contradiction.

Professor Ruether begins with a critique of the influential contemporary christologies of Hans Küng and Edward Schillebeeckx, which she faults for presenting diverse portraits of an apolitical Jesus. Her own political christology is heavily influenced by Latin American authors, especially Jon Sobrino, but she

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adapts it creatively to first world issues such as Jewish-Christian relations, feminism, and ecology.

In summary, the two books may serve as models of serious conversation between first and third worlds, even though they do not answer or even raise many fundamental issues. But there will be abundant time ahead to deepen and broaden the dialogue, as is clear from the observations of the influential Catholic theologian, David Tracy, in his introduction to the Chicago conference:

> It is now clear that the major breakthrough in Christian theology in the last decade has been the explosive emergence of political and liberation theologies. From Latin American, African, and Asian liberation theologies through Euro-American political theologies to North American black theologies and feminist theologies, the theological landscape has been irretrievably changed.

In search of an American idiom

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

A NEW WORLD NAKED

Paul Mariani

McGraw-Hill, $24.95, 874 pp.

Phillip Corwin

IN 1921, at the age of thirty-eight, William Carlos Williams published a volume of poems entitled *Sour Grapes*. In that volume was a poem, "Complaint," which began:

> They call me and I go
> It is a frozen road
> past midnight, a dust
> of snow caught
> in the rigid wheeltracks.

These few lines provide a touchstone for many of the central concerns of Williams's life and art. To begin with, there is the simple language, underscoring Williams's relentless determination to draw rhythms from natural speech in order to establish a truly *American* poetry, rather than resort to the pedantic, traditionalist diction of those he considered academic poets, epitomized by his lifelong enemy and contemporary, T.S. Eliot. There is also evidence here of Williams's passion for using material at hand—in this case, his going out to care for a patient during a winter blizzard—as a building block for his esthetic structures. The culmination of this technique came, of course, with his epic, *Paterson*.

Nor should the simple, monosyllabic structure of these lines be overlooked, the fact that of twenty-two words, eighteen are composed of one syllable, the other four being disyllables, a fact that makes the poem immediately accessible. Here, too, is manifested Williams's concern for what he later called the "variable foot," actually a variable line, demonstrating his insistence on the need for a poet to use rhythms arising out of the uniqueness of each experience, rather than trying to impose classical metrics where they do not belong.

And then there are also the unavoidable implications in these lines of the poet being summoned by his Muse or his audience, his accepting the call and having to travel "a frozen road" (frozen by European tradition), "past midnight" (doesn't poetry always pay heed to the dark side of life, in spite of R.P. Blackmur's condescending and pernicious comment that Williams's poetry was devoid of any tragic dimension?), and seeing the snowy dust caught in "rigid wheeltracks" as he travels on his mission of mercy (the ruts of convention being covered with the white dust of ineffectual versifiers).

And what of the titles, of both the poem and the volume? Yes, Williams was bitter about his lack of recognition (*Sour Grapes*), and he *was* continually complaining. Once, in fact, during a public reading, at the age of fifty-three, Williams lamented that he still had never been able to publish a volume of prose or poetry that he had not had to subsidize.

Now a massive new biography has come along that attempts to satisfy Wil-

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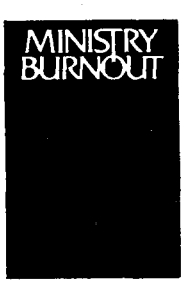

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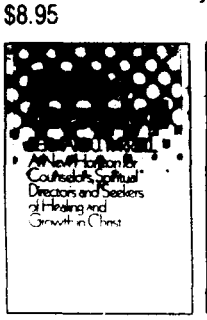

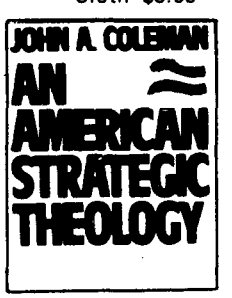

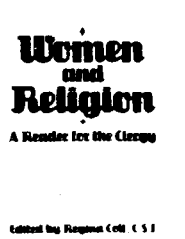

Women and Religion, A Reader for the Clergy, edited by Regina Coll, C.S.J. Some of the most creative contemporary religious thinkers have contributed to this effort to explore the role and meaning of the woman's movement and its significance for religion. Paper $4.95

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liams's complaint of six decades ago. It gives him the treatment that a major poet deserves; it is a comprehensive, empathetic, blockbuster of a book, a *War and Peace* of literary activity in America for the first half of the twentieth century. The cast of characters surrounding Williams is exhaustive, the biographical detail is extensive, the writing is lively and objective. Had Mariani been less modest, he might have called it the Age of Williams.

Finally, one hopes, with the publication of this biography, the peripatetic pediatrician from New Jersey, the cantankerous enemy of logic and the Establishment, the poet who denounced and was slighted by the brokers of culture yet who wanted their approval much as a rejected child desperately wants a parent's love, perhaps finally Williams will be accorded the serious recognition he merits. Perhaps he will even be included in the graduate seminars on modern poetry to the extent that his schoolmate Ezra Pound, and his nemesis T.S. Eliot are.

Mariani's book is so broad and so very good that any summary would be ineffective. Yet each reader invariably comes away with one major impression, and for this reader, that impression is a deepened awareness of the contradictions that permeated the man's life, and of how they energized him at the point where they threatened to be most enervating.

Here was a practicing physician who considered science to be an enemy of art, yet whose scientific eye for detail enriched his art. Here was a self-proclaimed adversary of what he called the medieval tyranny of classical learning, yet whose early heroes were Keats and Shakespeare, and who turned more than once to Dante for inspiration ("The Yachts" alludes to a scene from *The Inferno* where Dante and Vergil must cut through the arms and hands of the damned, floating beneath them), and who hopscotched Europe time and again to enhance his American career.

Here was a man by nature prissy, who insisted on incorporating into his correspondence, his theories, his poetry, the chthonian cadences and epithets of the common man. Here was a good bourgeois who was a closet beatnik. Here was a country doctor as cosmopolitan as any urban dandy. As a window between the old world and the new, Williams leapt at the opportunity to be accepted by the old world he was rejecting, at the same time he was denouncing the vulgarities of the new world he was chronicling. And for all his devotion to concreteness ("Say it! No ideas but in things!"), he devoted his energies, his integrity, his life, to developing an esthetic—an American idiom—that could never be anything but intangible, undefinable, and subjective.

Yet, he was an original, a magician, a poet's poet.

The final comment that begs to be made on Mariani's marvelous book is an ironic one. In a way, his study seems like an attempt to civilize Tom Sawyer, a hopeless task, or a proposal to nominate Williams for a chair in the non-existent Conservatory of Respectable Academic Poets (the acronym of which might have been WCW's own comment on such a proposal). It won't work; academic currency is soft, academic brokers are bankrupt. The fact is, however, that Williams, as Auden said of Yeats, has become his admirers. And what Mariani has done is to allow those of us already in the Williams camp to admire the good doctor even more. Let there be no complaint.

> *It had indeed been quite a life: the uphill struggle of an American revolutionary to establish – against the incredible odds of neglect, misinterpretation, dismissal – an American poetic based on a new measure and a primary regard for the living, protean shape of the language as it was actually used. It had been a fight, a magnificent fight, against the academy, against the numbing sclerosis of the universities, against the very scholars of the language (there were none, Williams insisted), against special interests of all kinds, and he had had to create a strategy and sometimes even desperate homemade measures where none had existed before.*
>
> —Paul Mariani
> *William Carlos Williams*

Swift & sure

MEXICO BAY

Paul Horgan

Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, $12.95, 240 pp.

Rosemary Booth

> *"He finally decided to park his car on the bluff above the city and make a watercolor drawing of four distances—the buildings of the main part of town just below him, the protected deep blue of the inlet this side of the breakwater, the paling blue of the Gulf receding to the almost invisible horizon, and finally the limitless sky in golden light . . ."*

PAUL HORGAN, now in his seventies, has published dozens of books, from juvenile tales, short stories, and trilogies, to cultural essays, biographies, and historical accounts, including a two-volume study of the Rio Grande in North American history, *Great River*, which won a Pulitzer Prize. His prolific outpouring has been catholic in another sense as well, encompassing numerous perspectives of time and place. *Mexico Bay* is well set in this tradition, a fictional synthesis of eastern and western landscapes over several decades, from a variety of viewpoints—or "distances," as above.

It is a novel dramatically constructed. In it, Horgan's characters move through scenes of south coastal Texas in the 1950s; back into Washington, D.C. during the Second World War years; and forth toward a California future, always with a sensed backdrop of century-old occurrences. The four main figures themselves bring different attitudes to bear on the events in which they take part: famous playwright and pragmatist Jack Wentworth; Ben Ives, a painter struggling simultaneously for respecta-

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bility and self-respect; Howard Debler, historian and humanist; and Diana Macdonald, sometime partner to each of the men.

The characters are defined in their responses to the main event of the story—World War II—and also to its scenic analogue, Mexico Bay itself. This remarkable body of water, as Debler quotes from the journal of an early explorer, is "not a Baye in the guise of a shelter all compact from storme or pursuit, rather . . . it is a greate sea the whiche voyagers from farre lands observe onlie in its diverse parts. Thus there are given to it as manie characters as there be chroniclers . . ." Like the bay, the war evokes a spectrum of reactions.

To Wentworth, the conflict is an opportunity for advancement and conviviality on a dutifully grand scale. His assigned post in the information bureau gives Horgan a chance to describe wartime Washington in the idiom of the patriotic well-to-do:

> Everybody felt it, the vast surge of new energy and purpose, then, which the sudden state of war brought with it. In their various ways, people believed that a 'just war' was upon them. With all its disruptions and early bunglings, the mammoth heavings of a new national spirit stirring alive, the war pulled the great majority into a desire to take part in any way . . . An ambitious and privileged throng of the population converged on Washington.

Ives, as an artist, observes the war first-hand and portrays it directly in sketches of soldiers and others in the struggle overseas. The solitude of his stark vision disturbs the painter, who at times yearns to belong to "a working world alongside other men."

It is left to the scholar-writer Debler, who serves in the war, to span the gap between Wentworth's opportunism and Ives's visionary art. From the outset the historian knew that he "already had most of his facts. What he quested after . . . was the sense of men in a particular place." This search forms a framework for *Mexico Bay*, while Debler as protagonist resolves the contradictions posed by the other two men. Horgan depicts Debler's power as an ability to unite landscape with human activity, to enliven landscape with meaning; as in this description of Debler's conversation with Diana:

> He made her see the immensity of the Northern lands of Mexico and the present United States Southwest, and how they were once all one. The great Gulf of Mexico; the fateful border of the Rio Grande; the endless flat lands of mesquite brush and cactus; the vast deserts to the south where mountains rose and fell in profiles like lines of distant, unheard music; the white and pink, blue and earth-colored Mexican villages where armies ebbed and flowed and families were victims; the righteousness that gave energy to both sides of the war . . .

Diana Macdonald is a more anemic character than any of the men, depending on them for security and self-definition. She is, however, believable as a woman of the 1950s reared under fairly restrictive circumstances.

All of this analysis can be taken too seriously, of course. *Mexico Bay* is primarily a story, full of speed and energy as it spins to a finish. In addition to rich and precise details of setting, the novel is strewn with artful descriptions of people, as, for example, Howard Debler's mother, who kept a shoe box marked "Pieces of String Too Short to Use;" or Mrs. Florence Schrotke, proprietress of the Vista Bel Motel, whose

REVIEWERS

FATHER ALFRED T. HENNELLY, S.J. *is the author of* Theologies in Conflict *and co-editor, with John Langan, S.J., of* Human Rights in the Americas.

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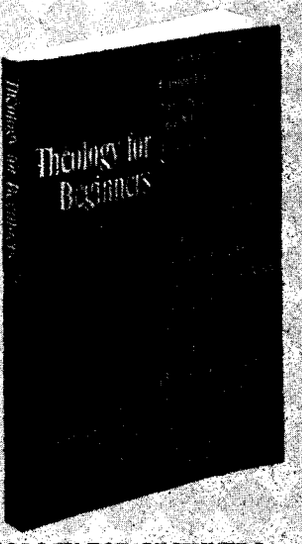

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face looked "like that of a glad sheep, with heavy makeup added."

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Pointing toward a new synthesis

BEYOND IDEOLOGY
RELIGION AND THE FUTURE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Ninian Smart

Harper & Row, $17.50, 350 pp.

John Ratté

THE CENTRAL question of this book — the Gifford lectures for 1979-1980—is: what contribution can theism make to a comprehensive worldview for an "emerging global city?" The context of the question is Ninian Smart's belief that men and women act in accordance with worldviews, and that nationalism and liberalism and Marxism and other secular ideologies are as effective—or more so—in shaping action as the traditional theisms.

Since Islam and Judaism are of the type of religion which focuses on the "Other" or the "Beyond" in its numinous (external, powerful, arbitrary historical) form, but are less global than Christianity as a worldview, Smart makes Christianity his example of this type, and, while recognizing the continuity of a mystical tradition in Christianity, centers his attention not on the hidden Christ, but the Pantokrator of the basilica and the cathedral.

In sharp contrast stands Buddhism. Smart shows that parts of the Buddhist tradition are also strongly oriented towards the external, the sacramental, the numinous, most notably Pure Land Buddhism and the Tibetan forms. In effect, each of the two traditions has both a numinous and a mystical, or inward and negating, component, but if one has to define the quintessential contribution of each form of theism to world history then Smart would say that the Buddha gives us the way which equates *samsara* with *nirvana* — reality with no-*thing*-ness — and Christ gives us a way which equates salvation with the Godhead sustaining all creation: reality with a very substantial and personal Other, our Father in heaven.

The first section of this book elaborates, by comparison and contrast, the parallels and complementarities of the two. The second section sketches the secular ideologies and comments also on humanism, science and its method as a way of seeking religious truth, and the need for a personalist dimension to temper the ethnocentrism of nationalism. A chapter is devoted to Mao and China in order to demonstrate the effective modernization of traditional society and the persistence of traditional (Confucianism, Buddhist, national-cultural) elements in Mao's thought and after his revolution.

In the complementarity between Buddhism and Christianity, and in the new critical stance the failures of secular ideologies have forced even on their own "believers," Smart sees a "pointing" towards "a new synthesis between Western and Asian civilization."

This is not a technical work, though Professor Smart might have helped his Western readers with the same kind of *tour d'horizon* of Buddhism he undertakes for nineteenth and twentieth century European history, since it's more likely that they know more about World Wars than the distinctions between the Greater and Lesser Vehicle.

Yet it is a very difficult work to read. In part this difficulty lies in the poor quality of the book itself. Poor editing, proof-reading ("Gosple" and "redicalism" appear on the same page) cheap paper, bleed-through, run-on words, and failure of capitalization all seem inappropriate in a work costing $17.50 and published by a major trade house. In part the difficulty lies, I think, in the imperfect transformation of a set of lectures into the linear structured phenomenon called a book. There are passages of considerable eloquence and stylistic imagi-

> *The arguments which I have deployed to suggest that there is a certain complementarity between Buddhism and Christianity, and to try to relate that perception to the critical evaluation of ideologies, point unmistakably in a particular direction—namely a new synthesis between Western and Asian civilization.* —Ninian Smart
> *Beyond Ideology*

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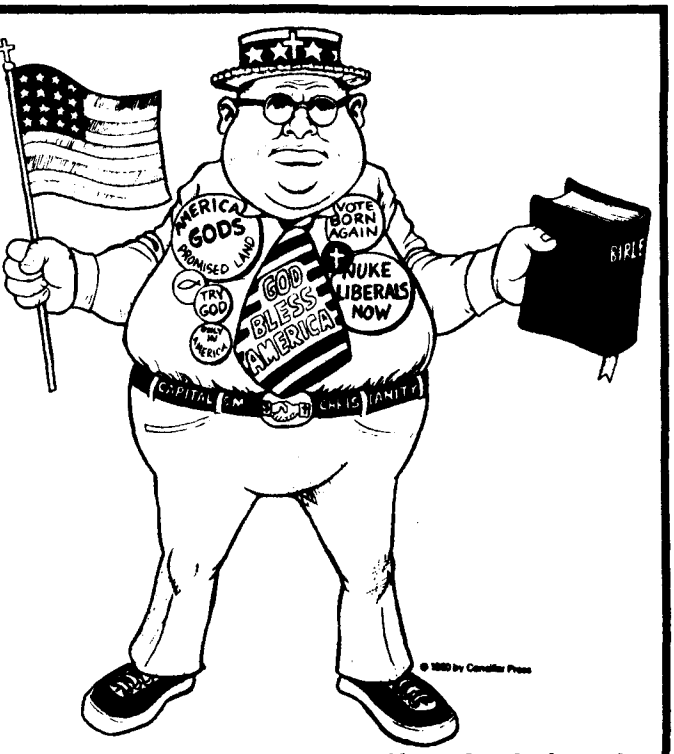

There are men like this running around all over the country. And they're multiplying. They have something to sell. They call it "Jesus Christ." But we suspect they're **also peddling intolerance and fear and middle class smugness and indifference to the poor.**

Their message is actually very beguiling. They tell us the Bible is our only rule of faith and practice. Then they flatter us by telling us that America is the "New Israel," God's Chosen Land. But have you noticed that they can't quote Scripture when they preach about America as the Promised Land? They don't because *it isn't in Scripture.*

They tell us America can be prosperous and mighty again—*if* we repent.

To everyone they promise something—be it health or riches or popularity or job promotions or better sex lives. *If* you repent. "Love God," they say. But not for God's sake. Rather, for your own sake.

They tell us that God is sovereign—but have you noticed how they turn God Almighty into man's slave? "Cheap grace" is what it is.

As seductive as this new discount gospel is, it is—we fear—not *the* gospel. And it's about time that—in all sincerity and charity—someone *say* so. **If you're fatigued with "Me" Christianity,** maybe it's time for you to investigate the NEW OXFORD REVIEW. We don't have any gimmicks, just the old, old gospel—the gospel of the apostles and Fathers and saints and martyrs and bishops and fools for Christ. The unchanging faith. The faith of the ages.

Sure, we publish a magazine. But before getting into that, this warning: **it sometimes *hurts* to die to self and grow in grace.**

The NEW OXFORD REVIEW isn't for everyone. But if you're up to being challenged by the historic faith, maybe *you* are for the NEW OXFORD REVIEW. And maybe it would be good for you to hear from our writers—people like Isabel Anders, Robert Coles, Peter E. Gillquist, Thomas Howard, Kathryn Lindskoog, Juli Loesch, Paul C. Vitz, and Robert E. Webber.

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nation. And there are sentences and paragraphs that are simply impenetrable. The Big Ideas come through, of course: and there is intellectual stimulation and food for controversy in the chapters which juxtapose liberal Protestant thought and Buddhist metaphysics. But the infrastructure of logic and style needed to convey to the reader the power these ideas hold for the writer is weak, and sometimes seems to be lacking altogether.

Professor Smart convinces me that theism is a prime, indeed an indispensable, foundation stone for a new world culture. I am equally convinced that Buddhism *ought* to continue to transform Western thought, to give us a new inwardness and compassion, and that the Christian teaching of the cosmic sacredness of the individual can have life in Asia long after the last vestiges of imperialism are washed away.

But then, I didn't need much convincing. If Professor Smart's ideas about the study of religions, the types of theism, and above all, the crucial importance of theism for a unified and peaceful world are to be effectively conveyed to the twentieth century's cultural despisers of religion and their fundamentalist allies in his promised next book on "the Pacific worldview," they will have to find tighter and more focused expression than they do in *Beyond Ideology*.

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In brief

CHRISTS: MEDITATIONS ON ARCHETYPAL IMAGES IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, *by David Miller, Seabury, $12.95, 200 pp.*

Archetypal psychology is a challenging development in the interpretation of culture. James Hillman, in *Re-Visioning Psychology*, called for a return to psyche or soul as the ground for psychology, with an emphasis on mythic and depth dimensions of the psyche's *logos*. Archetypal psychology has a religious emphasis too: dethrone the heroic ego of monotheism and restore the polytheism of inward gods. This can take the form of a return to "imaginal Greece" (Hillman) or here, in David Miller's *Christs*, a search through ancient myth and modern literature for a Christ who can, in Hopkins's words, "christ in us."

But this reviewer, basically well-disposed toward archetypal psychology, found *Christs* disappointing and frustrating. The style is readable, the project significant. Miller hopes to see through traditional images of Christ to pagan, pluralistic unheroic counter-images buried beneath. He believes that imperfection, foolishness and ecstasy speak more authentically to us today than their opposites: moral perfectionism, rationalism, sobriety. This is a profound spiritual claim, but the route that Miller takes to arrive at it, and the specific images he endorses, are simply too quirky to do justice to his deeper intentions.

The first third of the book takes up the figure of "the Good Shepherd." Finding this an endorsement of perfectionism (I'm still not clear how or why), Miller turns to Hermes the ram then to Polyphemos the grotesque cyclops-shepherd of Homer, for a non-perfectionist re-visioning of Christ. Then, in order to portray how these images correspond to twentieth-century experience, he invokes the aid of writers such as Wallace Stevens and James Joyce. The same pattern is followed in the next two sections, those on Christ the Clown, and Christ the Teacher. Greek, anti-hero models are perceived beneath

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the traditional pictures.

Perhaps this reviewer's lack of enthusiasm for Miller's actual results can be clarified by comparing *Christs* with Hugo Rahner's *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*. Praised by Miller as a source for his own project, Rahner's work demonstrates exactly that loving enthusiasm for Hellenistic thought-forms which Miller fundamentally lacks. Rahner, who never flouts historical detail for the sake of "imaginal" connections, shows how for the Hellenistic mind, the miracle of redemption could be seen in the mandrake root, and the work of the Logos in the lines of Homer. This world-view believed that God has so constructed nature and poetry that these could be "read" for endless hidden meanings. Without this firm assumption, the "Greek connections" are simply reflections of the interpreter's own discontent with the texts and images available to him. Miller's Christ-Hermes association is arbitrary in a way that even the far-fetched allegories of the Greek Church Fathers were not.

Archetypal psychologists may cry "Literalism!" against this objection, for literalism and moralism are the twin villains for Miller and others who follow this method. But there is something so idiosyncratic in Miller's train of associations — from clown make-up to Fliess's "nasal psychology" to *Finnegans Wake* — that the literalist in me wants more solidity. A Christ who can christ in us must still be a Word made flesh, and this, I'm afraid, Miller fails to bring us.

LUCY BREGMAN

Correspondence

(Continued from page 514)

How does a people whose history is full of persecution now bring the same terror to others?

The world has the right to expect a more responsible Israel. Jewish history should by now (and for many Jews it has) raise their level of moral conciousness to one which would not allow today's action in Lebanon to happen. While we do not condone the PLO's actions, we have the right to expect Israel will put a higher value on all human life. This is the crux of today's rapidly changing perception by Americans of Israel.

In the basement of a building in Sidon, Lebanon a direct hit leaves over 250 bodies of men, women, and children. In Beirut hospitals one hears and sees crying, maimed children wondering what this is all about. Before the PLO exodus, welfare agencies such as the Red Cross and World Vision tried for days to bring medicine and food into Israeli-secured areas only to be refused by the military authorities. The scene was repeated daily.

What has been lost by the Israeli government is the realization that tyranny's horror knows no one country's uniform. When one takes the life of innocents under the banner of self-protection, one makes a statement. Those who behave so tell the world they value their own lives more than the innocents whose lives they take. This is the greatest affront to humanity.

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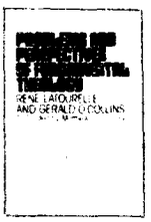

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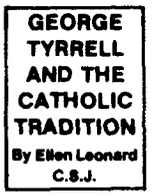

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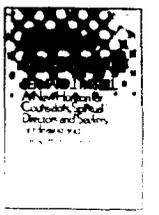

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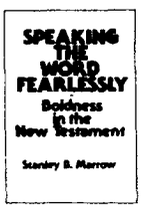

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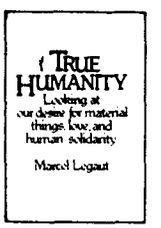

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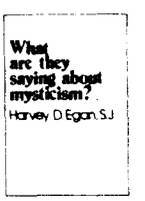

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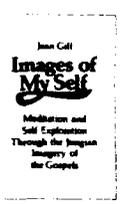

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